

# **IS JESUS GOD**

**AN ARGUMENT  
BY GRADUATES OF  
PRINCETON  
SEMINARY**

**AMERICAN TRACT SOCIETY  
NEW YORK**

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# *IS JESUS GOD*

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PRINCETON SEMINARY

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With  
Introductory Note by  
PROF. B. B. WARFIELD, D.D.

AMERICAN TRACT SOCIETY  
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## INTRODUCTORY NOTE.

THIS little volume offers a constructive argument for the Deity of Christ. It owes its origin to an attempt by the members of a class in Princeton Theological Seminary, during the session of 1911-1912—the Centennial Session of the Seminary—to give a reasoned answer to a series of inquiries. These, taken in sequence, raised the salient questions which every one must face who undertakes to investigate historically the evidence for the Deity of Christ. These inquiries, in their order, were:—

1. Does the Christian Church teach the Deity of Christ?
2. Has the Christian Church always taught the Deity of Christ?
3. Do the New Testament writers teach the Deity of Christ?
4. Do the Evangelists represent Christ as Himself teaching His Deity?
5. Did Jesus teach His own Deity?
6. Is Christ God?

### *Introductory Note.*

A considerable number of essays were presented on each of these topics. Those here printed were selected because they seemed to fit well into one another, and together to present a solid argument for the ultimate conclusion. Naturally, the essays should be read consecutively and with regard to their relation to one another, that their force may be felt. As the importance of the topics increases progressively, it has been thought well, while but one essay is printed on each of the earlier, to print two on each of the later of them. This entails some slight repetition, but it is hoped will be found to add strength to the general presentation of the argument.

It is with great confidence that I place these essays by a company of earnest young men, seeking (and finding) the truth, before a larger public than that for which they were prepared, asking for them a candid—I scarcely need ask an indulgent—reading.

BENJAMIN B. WARFIELD.

PRINCETON THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY,

## DOES THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH TEACH THE DEITY OF CHRIST?

By RIENK BOUKE KUIPER.

BEFORE a satisfactory answer can be given to this question it is necessary to define some of its terms. What is meant by "the Christian Church"? Not the "holy catholic church" of the Apostles' Creed which includes the whole body of Christ of all times and lands as one spiritual organism; our question is concerned only with the present. Again, we have to do with the Church in its visible aspect; because of our inability to say who are and who are not members of the invisible Church, we can successfully investigate the teaching only of the visible Church. We must also here face the question which very naturally presents itself, Can a Church that denies the deity of Christ be called Christian? It is evident that a negative answer to this question at this stage



of the discussion would at once destroy the whole problem. For if only that Church which teaches the deity of Christ is truly Christian, then of course the Christian Church teaches the deity of Christ, or else there is no Christian Church. We are constrained therefore to take the term Christian Church simply in its conventional sense. It includes the whole body of those who are members of any institution called a Church which professes to be, not Jewish, Mohammedan, or pagan, but Christian.

The term "deity of Christ" must next be defined. There is little or no question as to what the earliest followers of Christ, the early Church, and in fact orthodox Christianity of succeeding times, have meant when the dogma has been confessed. What has been meant is clearly and unambiguously stated in the ecumenical creeds. It is confessed that Christ is the only begotten Son of God, his Son therefore in a sense in which no other being can possibly be called God's Son, perfect God, of the substance of the Father. To put the case briefly, the term deity of Christ in its historical meaning im-

plies nothing less than the unity of substance of the Father and his Son Jesus Christ. He who accepts the deity of Christ in this sense confesses that Christ is God in that sense in which there is but one God. This meaning we shall attach to the term in the attempt to answer our question. We need not defend ourselves for so doing. On the contrary, anybody who wishes to attach any other sense whatsoever to the term needs to defend his course of action. The phrase, the deity of Christ, has a historical meaning, and if anybody desires to deny the dogma in this sense and yet wishes to maintain it in a modified sense, he should, we believe, for the sake of veracity, invent another formula to give expression to his view of the person of Christ.

From what has just been said the transition to the problem proper is easy. There are theologians at the present time, not a few of them within the pale of the Church, who hold modified views concerning Christ's deity or divinity, or possibly deny the doctrine altogether. In the Appendix to Hastings' *Dictionary of Christ and the Gospels* A. S. Martin treats of "Christ in Modern Thought"

and distinguishes between the Christ of speculation, the Christ of experience, and the Christ of history. The Christ of speculation is denied pre-existence, sinless birth, resurrection, divine authority and sole mediation. Yet he is called the Son of God, but in the same sense in which men are sons of God. The Christ of experience, to a large extent a product of the Ritschlian school, is admitted to be divine, but not in the old dogmatic sense. His divinity is said to consist in the fact that his will was in perfect harmony with God's and that in the moral sphere he displayed the highest divine attributes. The Christ of history is much more openly denied all divinity. He is stripped of supernaturalism and all the emphasis is placed on his true humanity. The secret of his success is said to lie in his psychological uniqueness, *i. e.*, in his unequalled goodness and greatness. But he is not divine. We cannot forbear calling attention here to some of the fine phrases which William Adams Brown uses in his *Essence of Christianity*, when he speaks of Jesus Christ as the central figure of Christianity. He calls God the Father of Christ, but only after he has called

him the Father of us all in seemingly the same sense in the immediately preceding sentence (p. 313). Again he says: "Sonship takes on a larger meaning. . . . We still recognize man's littleness, . . . but the recognition loses its terrors as in Christ we perceive what man may become." These words may be interpreted, no doubt, in an orthodox sense; but do they not tend greatly to obscure the uniqueness of Christ's Sonship?

Finally we must call attention to the Unitarian movement. The phrase "the pure humanity of Jesus" covers a variety of convictions. Some Unitarians are almost Trinitarians, approaching Christ on the divine side and affirming, though in an unorthodox sense, his pre-existence, uniqueness, sinlessness, etc. Others contemplate the human side, and believe that he was naturally born and endowed with qualities and gifts differing in degree and not in kind from those which all men enjoy. All this makes it clear that there are men today who deny the deity of Christ or accept the doctrine only in an unorthodox sense; and it is an undisputed fact that some of them are in the Church.

The question now arises whether the teaching of these individuals or even groups can be said to be that of the Christian Church. We believe that the answer must be an emphatic negative. To substantiate our conviction we shall dwell first of all on the attitude of the Church toward deniers and modifiers of the doctrine of the deity of Christ, and thereupon call attention to the positive confession of Christ's deity by the Church.

First, attention must be called to the reaction among the theologians themselves against the denial of Christ's deity. We may refer here to such men as Kunze, Steinbeck, Braig, Hoberg, Weber, and Esser, A. M. Fairbairn, and Forsyth. After all, however, the teaching of the Church is not determined by a few theologians, but we must give heed to the expression of its faith by the Church as a whole, which includes comparatively unlearned men as well as theologians, laymen no less than the clergy. Now is the Church being influenced to any considerable extent by denials and modifications of the doctrine of Christ's deity? We believe not. Take for example the attempt to get at "the historical Christ." This example



is a fair one for there are no truths which more readily gain assent or are more firmly retained than those of an historical order. Therefore also they are most within the grasp of the popular mind and can be expected to touch the instincts of popular faith. Has, then, the so-called historical Christ succeeded in displacing the so-called dogmatic Christ? Evidently not. The average church member of today, just as his father and grandfather, still derives his view of the person of Christ from the writings of the Evangelists and the Apostles. Now it is precisely the integrity of the Gospels and Epistles as a reliable source of information and the validity of the claims which Christ made for himself which have been attacked by those who wish to present to us the real Christ of history. It is evident therefore that they have not persuaded the Church to take as much as the first step away from the supernatural Christ.

But neither has the Church lent its ear to those clever theologians who have tried and are trying to give a new meaning to the term, the deity of Christ. The very fact that they are using old, well-established terms to intro-

duce their new ideas may be called an admission on their part that they have not yet gained their point. It is a perilous undertaking to judge motives, but does it not seem that some present-day theologians are trying to gain acceptance for their views of Christ's person under cover of the term "divinity of Christ," just because they know only too well that in no other way will they ever succeed in introducing their ideas into a Church which still clings tenaciously to the true deity of Christ? And what, it may be asked, does the average church member know of a deity of Christ which is no deity but perhaps only a very high kind of humanity? Men are still too straightforward, too unsophisticated, to mean anything by the deity of Christ except that Christ is God.

And what is the Church's attitude toward Unitarianism? On more than one occasion when a gathering has been held of representatives of different Christian denominations, the Unitarians have been excluded because they deny the deity of Christ. In these cases the Church, at any rate some Churches, affirmed that denial of Christ's deity excludes

from the Christian Church. In Hastings' *Dictionary of Christ and the Gospels* under the article "Divinity of Christ" the Unitarians are spoken of as deniers of the doctrine. The article concludes with these words: "Unitarianism has at all times failed to lead. The Church has never become a prey to the narrower reason and limited emotions of the Unitarian schools."

When we deny that the Church has been led to abandon the doctrine of the deity of Christ, we do not say that it does in every case reject false teachings on this point as vigorously as it should. If it did, there would not be a single individual in the Church who openly denies Christ's deity. It is indeed a deplorable fact that it is possible for men who do not believe in Christ's deity to retain their places in Christ's Church. We may not adopt the well-known device of the ostrich with reference to this fact, nor may we make light of it under cover of a superficial optimism. Still, though it may be, and is, true, that the Church should more eagerly oppose errors in this respect, it would be difficult to say how the Church could more clearly in a positive way

affirm its belief in Christ's deity than it does. To this we now call attention.

The Christian Church, Roman Catholic and Protestant, professes in the Apostles' Creed to believe in Jesus Christ, the only Son of God the Father. In many parts of the Christian Church this creed is accustomed to be solemnly repeated on every Sabbath. Two things are here emphasized: that Christ is the Son of God, and that his Sonship is unique; viz., that he is the Son of God in a sense in which no one else can be called a son of God. That he is the Son of God means that he is God. We cannot dwell at length on the supernatural character of Christ which is strongly affirmed in the immediately following articles of this creed. Suffice it to say that it cannot be predicated of any being who is anything less than divine. Just think, for example, of the judgment of quick and dead ascribed to him, which is the work of God alone. And what clear expressions of Christ's deity are to be found in the Nicene and so-called Athanasian creeds, which though not so well known as the Apostles', are yet recognized by many Churches as authoritative. Again how clearly Christ's

deity is affirmed in the separate creeds of the Churches, Reformed, Lutheran, and others. Nobody doubts this. In view of the confession of Christ's deity in these creeds of parts of the Church and the clear confession of it by the whole Church in the Apostles' Creed, it cannot be doubted that the Church teaches Christ's deity.

But not only in its creeds does the Church confess Christ's deity. It does so in its songs. It speaks thus:

"Forbid it, Lord, that I should boast  
Save in the death of Christ, my God."

And here especially does the unity of spirit of the whole Church of Christ appear. To quote Principal Fairbairn: "The high Anglican praises his Saviour in the strains of Luther and Isaac Watts, Gerhardt and Doddridge; the severe Puritan and Independent rejoices in the sweet and gracious songs of Keble and Faber, Newman and Lyte; the keen and rigid Presbyterian feels his soul uplifted as well by the hymns of Bernard and Xavier, Wordsworth and Mason Neale, as by the Psalms of David. And this unity in praise and worship which so



transcends and cancels the distinctions of community and sect, but expresses the unity of faith and fellowship of heart in the Son of God."

Then think of the divine honor which the Church assigns to Christ. We shall mention but a few of the most apparent ways in which the Church honors Christ as God. It prays to him just as it does to the Father, and in doing so it assumes that he is omniscient, omnipresent, and omnipotent; in fine it ascribes attributes to him which manifestly belong only to God. Every time the benediction is pronounced upon the congregation the Church makes Christ equal to God. He is mentioned alongside of the Father without a hint at subordination. Yes, "the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ" is spoken of even before "the love of God the Father," not, to be sure, because Christ is placed above the Father, but because he is not inferior to him. And whenever the sacrament of baptism is administered, the doctrine of the Trinity, which makes Christ the Son of God and therefore himself God, is pronounced over him who through baptism is declared a member of the Christian

Church. Whenever therefore the Church receives a new member it confesses its belief in Christ's deity.

And does not the Church finally confess that Christ is God when it teaches men to flee to him and in its prayers itself goes to him for the forgiveness of sins? To be sure we are accustomed, and rightly so, to ask God to pardon our sins for Christ's sake, and even when we do this we confess that man cannot free himself from the guilt of sin, but that he needs the sacrifice of God's own Son. But how much more emphatically does the Church confess its faith in Christ as God when it instinctively flees to him personally with its burden of guilt and urges others to do the same! For the doctrine that only God can forgive sins is not peculiarly Rabbinical or Jewish, it is rooted in the universal consciousness of man. Everybody who feels the burden of his sins weighing upon him instinctively flees to his God or his gods for deliverance. This applies to the pagan as well as to the Christian. And he cannot rest until he feels in the depth of his heart that God has declared him free from all guilt. The principle underlying the ques-

tion of the Jews: "Who can forgive sins but God only?" is correct, and everybody who knows what sin is, knows this also. Everybody therefore who asks Christ to forgive his sins thereby expresses faith in his deity. It is said that the Christian Church is tending to relegate dogmas to the background in favor of ethics and morality. This is true; and it is quite possible, and even likely, that this tendency will cause many to lose sight of the importance of Christ's deity. We can safely even go so far as to say that it is already having this deplorable effect. This fact is indeed a sad one. Yet we need not be disheartened, for so long as the Holy Ghost truly convicts men of sin, they will feel the need of a divine Saviour.

When Peter had confessed: "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God," Jesus replied: "Thou art Peter; and upon this rock will I build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." These words of the Saviour have to the present time not failed of fulfillment. The Church today believes and teaches the deity of Christ. The gates of hell have not prevailed against it.

## HAS THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH ALWAYS TAUGHT THE DEITY OF CHRIST?

By DANIEL STEPHANUS BURGER JOUBERT.

THE question, What think ye of Christ? has been variously answered through the ages. Humanitarians say that Christ is a man and nothing more. Arians say that though he was a creature, he is more than man. The Christian Church has through the ages given but one answer, namely, that he is both God and man. It is to the former element in this answer that we have to give our attention, to show that at all times the Christian Church has consistently taught the deity of Christ. That this has been the firm belief of the Church all along may be shown in two ways. For a belief may be professed either by stating it in terms or by acting in a manner that necessarily implies it. And there is after all no essential difference between the expression

of a conviction in language and its consistent reflection in life.

We shall first consider the last of these statements. How then was this belief reflected in the life of the early Christians? In other words, did the Ante-Nicene Church as a whole, its congregations of worshippers, its poor, its young, its unlettered, as well as its saints and martyrs, so act and speak as to imply a belief that Jesus Christ is actually God? To this the history of the Christian Church has but one reply: That she believed in the divinity of Christ is manifested by the universal practice of adoring and worshipping him.

The existence of sects which refused to acknowledge the divinity of Christ and the uncertainties of some of those who did acknowledge him, are alleged by some as a ground for denying to that age any assured belief in Christ's divinity. But the existing material does not warrant the conclusion. Christ is everywhere adored as God. The early Church not only admired Christ but she worshipped him. As one has said, "She approached his majestic person in that way of tribute, of prayer, of self-prostration, of self-



surrender, by which all serious theists, whether Christian or non-Christian, are accustomed to express their relationship as creatures to the Almighty Creator." Moreover this worship of Jesus was never protested against in the churches as something new, something unheard of, something detracting from the honor due to God. Neither was there ever a time when he was invoked simply as a saint.

This adoration of Jesus began in his earthly life, continued after his ascension, and has become the inheritance of succeeding ages. As an infant he was worshipped by the wise men. The leper worshipped him, saying, "Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean." The man who was born blind confessed his faith in the Son of God and accompanied it by an act of worship: "And he said, Lord, I believe, and he worshipped him." Thus also at Jesus's ascension the disciples worshipped him. No sooner had Christ ascended on high than he began to draw all men unto him. This attraction was not only assent to his teaching but adoration of his person. As Liddon says: "No sooner had he ascended to his throne than there burst upward from the heart of his

Church a tide of adoration which has only become wider and deeper with the lapse of time."

In the first days of the Christian Church the Christians were known as "those who called upon the name of Jesus Christ." Prayer to Jesus was the devotional act which especially characterized the Christian. Stephen's last cry was a prayer to Jesus. The words which Jesus addresses to the Father are by Stephen addressed to Jesus. At his conversion Saul of Tarsus surrendered himself to Christ as the only and lawful Lord of his being. "Lord, what wilt thou have me do?" he cried. Thus we see that the worship paid to Jesus in apostolic times was that worship which is due to God alone. This worship of Jesus was handed down to succeeding ages and has become an integral part of the spiritual life of the Church.

Coming now to the early fathers, we find that they refer to the worship of our Lord as a matter beyond dispute. Ignatius asks the Roman Christians to put up litanies to Christ that he might attain to the distinction of martyr. Justin protests to the emperor that the

Christians worshipped God alone, yet he adds significantly that the Son and the Spirit share in the same reverence which is offered to the Father. In the so-called second letter of Clement we also find the words: "Brethren, we ought so to think of Christ as the Son of the living God, as of the judge of the quick and the dead." Clement of Alexandria in one of his treatises says: "Believe, O man, in Him who is both man and God; believe, O man, in Him, the living God, who suffered and is adored." Origen reports Celsus who wrote against the Christians as saying: "The worship of Christ is fatal to the Christian doctrine of the unity of God, while they offer an excessive adoration to this person who has lately appeared in the world. How can they think that they commit no offence against God, by giving these divine honors to his Son?" Christ was not only believed to be divine and adored as divine, but it was clearly taught that he was divine. The Ante-Nicene "rules of faith" as they are found in the writings of Irenæus, Origen, Tertullian, Cyprian, are in essential agreement with the Apostles' Creed as it appears in the fourth century. They all confess the divine-human

character of Christ as the chief object of the Christian faith, but this is done in ordinary popular style, not in the form of doctrinal, logical statement. The baptismal formula of that period also maintains strictly the New Testament practice of combining the Son with the Father and the Spirit.

Hymns have always been a popular instrument for the expression of religious feeling and worship; and from the earliest years of Christianity they were consecrated to the honor and worship of Christ. Eusebius quotes the following: "The psalms and hymns of the brethren, which from the earliest days of Christianity have been written by the faithful, all celebrate Christ, the Word of God, proclaiming his divinity." Of these early hymns of the Church some remain to this day as a witness to Christ's divinity. Such are the *Gloria in Excelsis* which was the daily morning hymn of the Eastern Church, the *Tersanctus*, the hymn of Clement of Alexandria to the Divine Logos. Pliny writing to the emperor says: "It appeared that on a stated day the Christians met before daybreak and sang a hymn to Christ as God." This is not a mere

vague report but a definite answer elicited from several persons in cross-examination. The value of these hymns, teaching the deity of Christ, is clearly shown by the conduct of Paul of Samosata. He banished them from his churches because he did not wish to confess with the Church that the Son of God had descended from heaven. He held Christ was a mere man; that he was from below and raised to divine rank.

Next we come to the witness of the martyrs who preferred death to replacing Christ by the emperor in their worship. The death-cry of many a martyr shows us the divine honor paid by the Christians to Christ. Here we have part of the prayers of two. Felix an African bishop cries: "O Lord, God of heaven and earth, Jesus Christ, to Thee do I bend my neck by way of sacrifice, O Thou who abidest forever." Polycarp exclaims at his martyrdom: "For all things, O God, do I praise and bless and glorify Thee, together with the eternal and heavenly Jesus Christ, Thy well-beloved Son, with whom to Thee and the Holy Ghost be glory both now and forever." Someone has said, "Thus it was that the mar-



tyrs prayed and died; their voices reach us across the intervening centuries, but time cannot impair their moral majesty or weaken the accents of their strong and simple conviction." This worship of Jesus by the martyrs is full of the deepest elements of worship; nothing short of a belief in the absolute divinity of Jesus could justify such worship.

In the second place, we wish to show how this belief in the deity of Christ was expressed in living terms by the early Church either through its prominent leaders or in the councils of the whole Church, when attacked by adverse criticism and heresies. Such a doctrine as the deity of Christ could not at first bring peace to the earth; it could not help bringing division. "It could not help dividing families, cities, nations, continents, and it would have utterly collapsed when confronted with the heat of opposition it provoked had it not descended from the Source of all truth." We may say that the ecclesiastical development of this fundamental dogma started from Peter's confession (Mat. xvi., 16), "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God," and John's doctrine of the incarnate Logos (John

i., 14), "And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us." This central truth of Christ's divine person and work is set forth in the New Testament writings, however, not so much in the form of a logically formulated dogma, as of a living fact, an object of faith and a source of strength. And the mind of the Church required for a season to meditate upon and try to grasp what this implied.

Theological speculation on the Person of Christ began with Justin Martyr and was carried on by Clement of Alexandria and Origen in the East, and Irenæus, Hippolytus and Tertullian in the West. It would have been impossible for these fathers and the Christian world to have drawn from the teachings of the evangelists and the apostles any other conclusion than that Christ was more than man,—God manifest in the flesh. The Gospels spoke of his incarnation, his sinlessness, his miraculous power; they testified to his eternal pre-existence, and his ascension to his former glory. With this the earliest teachers of the Church were content. When they asserted that Christ was "both human and divine, born and unborn, God in the flesh, life in death, born of Mary

and born of God," they entered into no further speculation on the point. This could not, however, always remain so. The doctrine of Christ's deity was openly attacked. The first to deny it were the Ebionites, the Nazarenes, the followers of Artemon, and the Alogi. The earliest of these were the Jewish-Christian Ebionites. To them Jesus was simply a man on whom for his piety the Spirit of God descended at his baptism, qualifying him for the Messiahship. But they remained merely a sect and disappeared about the fifth century. To their denials the orthodox fathers, the leaders of the Christian Church, among other things opposed the declaration of John that the Logos became flesh. But as was natural, their opinions were as yet somewhat vague and even in some instances erroneous. Moreover, we have to remember that the course of historic development in Theology is from popular statement to scientific statement. Their individual insight was not sufficient to enable them to arrive at those careful scholastic definitions to which the Church was guided by the collective wisdom of ecumenical councils after periods of long and painful conflict. Jerome

says: "It may be that they erred in simplicity and that they wrote in another sense or that their writings were gradually corrupted by unskillful transcribers, and certainly before Arius was born they made statements incautiously which are open to the misrepresentations of the perverse."

The doctrine of the Church has, in all its stages of development, been accompanied by rationalistic hesitation and in the third century the Church was once more called upon to uphold the eternal deity of Christ. This movement was the rationalistic Monarchianism which found its full development in Paul of Samosata. He held that Christ was a mere man, was from below, and from man became God. This view the Church decidedly rejected and Paul's views were condemned at a Synod held in 269 A.D. But the Monarchian controversies in the third century were but preludes to the great struggle of the Arian controversy in the fourth century. The Ante-Nicene Christology although passing through many abstractions, loose statements, uncertain conjectures and speculations, nevertheless in its main current flowed steadily towards the

Nicene statements, and this the Arian struggle fully brought out. The doctrine that the Church contended for in this great strife, although not theologically formulated, lay in the faith of the Church from the very beginning as involved in its confession. The aim of those who defended the Church doctrines was the defence of the vital points of the faith and not a mere strife about words, as some of her opponents would contend. Their appeal was always to Scripture and to continuous tradition. "The Little Labyrinth," for example, written at the commencement of the third century, in refuting the Unitarians of its day—the Artemonites—makes its appeal to Scripture, to the teaching of earlier writings, to Christian psalms and hymns. "Perchance," it says, "what they allege might be credible were it not that the divine Scriptures contradict them. \* \* \* For who knows not the works of Irenæus and Melito and the rest in which Christ is announced as God and man? Whatever psalms and hymns were written by the faithful brethren, from the beginning celebrate Christ as the Word of God, asserting his divinity." The opinions of Arius were

condemned by a council held at Alexandria, but this only brought about a greater controversy and soon the whole Christian Church was involved in the strife. Constantine tried by his individual efforts to settle the dispute, but when this failed he summoned a council of the whole Christian world to decide the matter. The struggle brought clearly out certain tendencies working in the Church and compelled the Church formally to reject them and declare in living form its belief in the eternal Godhead of Christ.

The Arian heresy denied the strict deity of Christ, that is his co-equality with the Father, and taught that he is a subordinate divinity, different in essence from God (*heteroousios*), pre-existing before the world yet not eternal, for there was a time when he was not. He was himself a creature of the will of God, made out of nothing, who created the present world and became incarnate for our salvation. In other words, the Arians were creature-worshippers, no less than the heathen. Another party, the semi-Arians, held a middle ground between the orthodox and Arian views and asserted the "*homoiousia*" or similarity of es-



sence of the Son with the Father. This was a very elastic term and might be contracted into an Arian or stretched into an orthodox sense according to the tendency of the man who held it. Athanasius the father of orthodoxy and the three Cappadocian fathers, Basil, Gregory of Nazianzus, and Gregory of Nyssa, defended the homoousia—the essential oneness of the Son with the Father, or in short his eternal divinity, as the cornerstone of the whole Christian religion. The question which Athanasius and his party contended for was in the words of Harnack, “Is the divine being who has appeared on the earth and has united man with God, identical with the highest being who rules heaven and earth, or is he a half divine being?” That was the decisive question in the Arian controversy.

We should remember that what the Church asserted here as its belief was not something new, but what had always been the faith of the Church. Athanasius always appealed to the collective testimony of the Church in support of the doctrine he was defending. Bishop Alexander too says that he was “conscious that he was contending for nothing less than

the divinity of Christ, the universal faith of the Church." This doctrine triumphed in the councils of Nice in 325 and Constantinople in 381, and since then it has stood the test of the ages and has in essence been incorporated into all the great creeds of the Christian Church. It is thus expressed in the Nicene Creed: "We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of God, begotten of the Father before all worlds, God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God, begotten, not made, being of one substance with the Father, by whom all things were made, who for us men and for our salvation came down from heaven and was incarnate by the Holy Ghost of the Virgin Mary," etc.

Looking back at the result, we see that the relation of Nice to the teaching of the apostles and evangelists is that of an exact equivalent translation of the language of one intellectual period into that of another. The New Testament writings had taught that Jesus Christ is Lord of nature, of men, of heaven, of the spiritual world and the like. When therefore the question was raised whether Jesus Christ was or was not of one substance

with the Father, it became evident that of two courses one must be chosen. Either an affirmative answer had to be given or the New Testament teachings had in some way to be explained away. The Nicene fathers only affirmed in the philosophical language of the fourth century what Jesus and the apostles had taught in the popular dialects of the first century. They by no means enlarged it. The Nicene council did not vote a new honor to Christ which he had not before possessed. They objected to Arianism, that it was something entirely new. Thus the Church defined the limits of Catholic orthodoxy; and later ecumenical councils confirmed these decisions and for a long time no controversies arose on this subject. During a period of fifteen centuries no large number of real believers in Christ's divinity have objected to the Nicene statement. The Church of the middle ages confined itself to a defence of the Nicene doctrine and the strict emphasis laid on his divinity throughout the middle ages has been continued in the churches of the Reformation.

In conclusion, we note two movements which have strongly denied the deity of Christ

in more recent times. They have affected the Church as a whole very little. When the doctrine of the Church has been attacked in this respect there have always been men who have ably defended the eternal Godhead of Christ as laid down at the Council of Nice.

The first of these movements is Unitarianism, and here the words of Shedd will suffice: "It was a less profound form of error than Sabellianism and Arianism which in the first centuries had compelled the theologian to employ his most extensive learning and his subtlest thinking. As a consequence it has been and is still confined to but a very small portion of the Protestant world. Had Unitarianism adopted into its conception of Christ those more elevated views of his nature and person which clung to Sabellianism and even to Arianism, it would have been a more influential system. But merely reproducing the low humanitarian view of Christ which we found in the third class of Anti-Trinitarians of the second and third centuries, the Unitarian Christ possessed nothing that could lift the mind above the sphere of the merely human

and nothing that could inspire the religious affections of veneration and worship."

The second movement is the somewhat indirect attack on the divinity of Jesus made in several Lives of Christ. We mention only two,—Renan and Strauss. Strauss in his *Leben Jesu* regarded Jesus as merely "the idea of the identity of God and man and the mission of humanity built upon Messianic promise." Renan entirely abandoned Christ's divinity and while speaking of him as one whom his death had made divine, treated him from the viewpoint of an amiable Rabbi. These denials provoked strong reaction. Men like Neander, Ebrard, Lange, ably defended the truth of the Christian confession on this point. But the great masses of people in the Christian Church were left untouched by these attacks; they only made men who had found in Christ a Saviour indeed love the old faith better, and with increased fervor respect Peter's great confession, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God."

The times demand of us a vigorous reassertion of those fundamental truths of the Church which are likewise the very foundation of the

gospel system. We close with the words of John Stock: "The mythical account of Strauss' *Leben Jesu*, the unreal and unromantic Christ of Renan's *Vie de Jésus*, and even the merely human Christ of *Ecce Homo* can never work any deliverance in the earth. Such a Messiah does not meet the yearnings of fallen human nature. It does not answer the pressing query, 'How can man be just with God?' It supplies no effective or sufficient agency for the regeneration of man's moral powers. It does not bring God down to us in our nature. Such a Christ we may criticise and admire as we would Socrates, or Plato, or Milton, or Shakespeare, but we cannot trust him with our salvation, we cannot love him with all our hearts, we cannot pour forth at his feet the homage of our whole being, for to do so would be idolatry. *A so-called savior whose only power to save lies in the excellent moral precepts which he gave and the pure life which he lived, who is no longer the God-man but a mere-man, whose blood had no sacrificial atoning or propitiatory power in the moral government of Jehovah, but was simply a martyr's witness to a superior system of ethics, is not*



*the Saviour of the four Gospels or of Paul or Peter or John.* It is not under the banners of such a Messiah that the Church of God has achieved its triumphs. The Christ of the New Testament, of the early Church, of universal Christendom, the Christ the power of whose name has revolutionized the world and raised it to its present level and under whose guidance the sacramental hosts of God's redeemed are advancing and shall advance to yet greater victories over superstition and sin, is Immanuel, God-with-us, in our nature, whose blood cleanseth from all sin, and who is able to save even to the uttermost all who come unto God through Him."

## DO THE NEW TESTAMENT WRITERS TEACH THE DEITY OF CHRIST?

By HARM HENRY MEETER.

IN order to prove that the New Testament writers teach the deity, or in other words, the Godhead of Christ, it is not absolutely necessary to quote from each New Testament book. For, certain writers being authors of two or more books, testimony taken from the fourth Gospel, for example, will prove that the writer of John's Epistles taught Christ's deity; testimony taken from the third Gospel will prove that the author of Acts taught it, etc.

There may be some question as to what is meant by "teaching" the deity of Christ. If that be understood to mean that the New Testament writers purposed to make clear to their readers in so many words that Christ is God, then it may seriously be questioned whether any New Testament writer, with the

possible exception of John,—who mentions it as part of his purpose,—taught the deity of Christ. For in the very few passages that can at all be said to approach the form of a definition of Christ's divine nature, for example, Romans ix., 5 and certain passages in the first chapter of Hebrews, the author plainly aims, not at a definition of Christ's deity, but at something ulterior to that. On the other hand, the term "teach" can be understood to mean that the writings of the New Testament embody certain statements, from which by logical conclusion it follows that the writers themselves held Christ to be God. In this latter sense, I assume the term to be meant here. If it is taken in this sense, then there is an abundance of evidence to prove that they all held Christ to be God, that they could not have said what they did say had they not held the deity of Christ, that the deity of Christ as a tenet was interwoven with the very warp and woof of their religious teachings, fundamental to them, in fact a presupposition from which all started out.

To begin with, there are passages in the New Testament that in one way or another

directly ascribe deity to Christ. Thus it is plain that the Synoptists—which we treat together because it is generally conceded that they are in general harmony as to the portrait they give of Jesus—hold the deity of Christ, from the fact that they record God the Father as saying at Christ's baptism: "Thou art my Son in whom I am well pleased" (Matt. iii., 17; Mark i., 11; Luke iii., 22); and again on the Mount of Transfiguration: "This is my beloved Son, hear him" (Mark ix., 7; Luke ix., 35). That it is the metaphysical Sonship which is here witnessed to is plain from the statements made in the same connection. The Holy Spirit and the Father are associated with Christ at baptism. Of Christ it is said: "*This* is my Son," obviously in contradistinction to all others, God's "beloved One," the One "in whom God is well pleased," and men are admonished to "hear him." Again, a belief in Christ's deity is evident from the numerous passages recorded by the Synoptists, where Jesus speaks of God, not as our Father, but specifically as "*my* Father," indicating a unique relation in which he stood to God. Especially is this plain from the passage in

Matthew xi., 27, and the parallel one in Luke x., 22, which places Christ on an equality with God the Father: "All things are delivered unto me of my Father, and no man knoweth the Son but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal Him." It is needless to say that, when the Evangelists speak of God the Father's testimony, or of Christ's testimony to his own deity, they silently subscribe to that testimony as embodying their own opinion.

John opens his Gospel with a direct testimony to the deity of Christ, for he begins by saying: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." In fact, if we may take John at his word, his whole Gospel (chap. xx., 21), and his First Epistle as well (I. John v., 13), were written with the purpose that his readers might believe "that Jesus is the Christ, the (metaphysical) Son of God." And this statement regarding his purpose is borne out in the whole of the Gospel and of the First Epistle, by the titles given to Christ. Such are, for example, "Son," "the Only Begotten," "the Son

of God," the One "who is in the bosom of the Father." John's belief in Christ's deity is further plain from passages where Christ's oneness with the Father is emphasized. Significant here is the criticism of the Jews (x., 33) in regard to Jesus' calling God his Father. When Jesus asserted that he and the Father are one, the Jews sought to stone him, and they gave as a reason that they stoned him not for any good work, but because of blasphemy, whereas he, being a man, *made himself God*. This statement is a plain proof of how the Jews, how the men of Christ's time, and of how the Evangelists conceived of it, when Jesus spoke of God as specifically his Father. No other interpretation can be given than that they conceived of him as divine, as God.

This direct testimony to the deity of Christ, taken from the Gospels, is strengthened by statements found in Paul's writings. Of these we can mention but a few.

In Romans viii., 32, we read that "God spared not His own Son, but delivered him up for us all." Obviously here the Son, as well as God, stands outside the category of



human beings, for the Son was *delivered up* for them. And the word "*own Son*," which is here used for the sake of emphasis, shows Christ's unique and close relation to God, which, considering Paul's strict monotheistic conception of God, cannot mean anything else than that Jesus Christ is identical with God.

So also Romans ix., 5, seems decisive evidence that Paul teaches Christ's deity. It is just because this passage seemed to contain such decisive proof of Christ's deity, that some recent critics have gratuitously attacked the authenticity of the text. And all attempt to explain the relative clause "who is God over all" in any other way than by referring it to Christ must prove futile. The context demands its reference to Christ, since Christ is spoken of in the immediate connection, and it is only natural that, in reading this clause, we should think of him; moreover, the words "according to the flesh," which immediately precede, lead us to expect some description of the other side of Christ's person; and besides there would be no sense in inserting a doxology in praise of God the Father at this

point. Therefore these words must refer to Christ.

Philippians ii., 6, is no less conclusive proof of how Paul conceived of Christ. We read there: "Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God. . . ." And "form" here can imply nothing less than that he possessed the whole of the qualities which constitute God. Only so explained can it have meaning that because Christ was in the *form* of God, he did not need to think it robbery to be equal with God. And so conceived this passage leaves no room to doubt that Paul thought Christ divine.

Of the many proof-texts in Hebrews I will cite merely one. In i., 8, the writer, quoting an Old Testament passage, ascribes deity to the Son by saying: "Unto the Son he saith: 'Thy throne, *O God*, is forever and ever.' "

Peter likewise ascribes deity to Christ, when, in his great speech in Acts ii., 34, he says: "For David is not ascended into the heavens, but he saith himself: 'The Lord said unto *my Lord*: Sit thou on my right hand until I make thy foes thy footstool.' " Here

Peter quotes the same Old Testament passage to which Christ had reference when he proved to the Jews the deity of the Messiah. It admits of no doubt, therefore, it seems to me, that Peter, in appropriating that text as embodying his own opinion, meant to ascribe deity to Christ. So also in the tenth chapter of Acts, verse 36, Peter calls Christ "Lord of all." This he could not say if he did not think Christ divine.

In James and Jude, epistles themselves short, the passages which point to the deity of Christ are necessarily few. But even there it seems to allow of no doubt that Christ was conceived of as divine. In the opening verses of his epistle James, in styling himself "a servant of God and the Lord Jesus Christ," by coördinating these two, places Christ on an equality with God. And, speaking in chapter ii. of the Lord Jesus Christ, he calls him "the Lord of glory." The idea of the term *glory* is not merely to attribute glory to Christ, for *glory*, placed in apposition to *Christ*, signifies rather Christ, whose being consists in glory. Now such can with difficulty be said of Christ without accounting him to be God himself.

In like manner the epistle of Jude contains a passage which, although it does not directly call Jesus God, yet presupposes it. We read in the fourth verse: "Our only Master and Lord Jesus Christ." The word *only* is significant. If Jesus Christ is our *only* Master (Despot), then to the Jewish mind of Jude, Christ must be God, for in the end God was the only Master whom a Jew could recognize.

From this review of the New Testament writings it appears that each of the New Testament writers, in some form or other, directly ascribes deity to Christ. Numerous other texts might have been cited as corroborative testimony. But this evidence, gained from passages in which deity is directly ascribed to Christ, can only be subsidiary. For there is far stronger evidence in other facts recorded in the New Testament; besides the interpretation of even the strongest passages directly ascribing deity to Christ is always subject to debate, the critics who are not willing to concede Godhead to Christ interpreting them in their own way.

Further proof of Christ's deity I find then, first, in the divine attributes ascribed to him.

We have an epitome in Colossians ii., 9. Paul says: "In him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily." Christ is said to be *eternal* as God. John says: "In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." Christ to him was "the Alpha and Omega, the Beginning and the End." "Before Abraham was, Christ is." To Paul Christ, who had lived and died at Jerusalem, is "the first-born of every creature." To the author of Hebrews, "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever." So too Christ is *omnipresent*. To John, though he is walking on the earth, yet he is "in the bosom of the Father." He is the "Son of Man, which is in heaven." To Matthew, though he has ascended up to heaven, Christ is with his Church "even unto the end of the world." To Paul (in Ephesians i., 23,) Christ "filleteth all in all." Christ is *unchangeable*. The author of Hebrews tells us that, though heaven and earth shall wax old as a garment, Christ will remain the same. Christ is represented as *omniscient*. The Synoptists represent him as knowing what is in the heart of man, as knowing what Peter had answered

the taxgatherers, as knowing step by step what his life's course would be. Christ is *all-powerful*. To Paul he is "the Power of God and the Wisdom of God." The Evangelists portray him as having command over the powers of nature; the sea and the winds are under his control.

Another proof of his deity is the part he is said to take in the divine works. He takes part in the work of creation. According to John, "all things were created by him." Paul calls him "the beginning of the creation of God." He participates in the work of Providence. For, according to Colossians i., 17, "by him all things consist." According to Hebrews i., 3, "he upholds all things by the word of his power." His wonders even are expressive of his deity; for, unlike the prophets, who also performed wonders, Christ performed them in imitation of the Father (John v., 21), "For as the Father raiseth up from the dead and quickeneth, even so the Son quickeneth whom he will." Christ, while on earth, forgave sins. And "who can forgive sins but God alone?" He shall come, according to the Evangelists and II. Peter, to judge



the world as its Lord, which he could not do if he stood not to it in the relation of Creator to creature.

The Evangelists, Paul, and the author of the Hebrews make him the direct object of the Christian's prayer. This they could not do if they thought him not God, for only in his Godhead can we find ground of prayer unto him. Divine honor is also given him in making him the object of the Christian's faith. In John xiv., 1, Jesus tells his disciples that, as they believe in God, so also they shall make him the object of their faith, or, as some would have it, Jesus tells them he is the object of their faith just as God is. And of this faith in Jesus Christ almost all the New Testament writers speak. In so doing they give testimony to the deity of Christ. Christ it is on whom Christians, according to Peter and Paul, are told to build their hope for time and eternity. From him, according to Peter, Paul, John, and Jude, Christians expect grace. Now how were this possible if Christ were mere man, exalted to heaven though he be? What grace can be had from the saints in heaven, from Abraham or moth-

er Mary, for whom connection with those on this earth is practically severed?

Again, a proof of Christ's deity is the active part he now is said to take in the work of salvation. The mystical union of believers with Christ, symbolized by the figure of the vine and the branches in John xv., and so often spoken of in Paul's epistles, implies as a necessary presupposition that Christ is divine, and would be robbed of its meaning if we, in a rationalistic way, understood it to signify union merely with Christ's teachings. John records Jesus as saying (John xiv., 23,) that, if any man love Christ, the Father and he will dwell in their hearts. Christ, who has died and departed from this earth, is represented in Corinthians (I. i., 4-9, 30, 31, xv., 45), as the source of Spiritual Life, as a life-giving Spirit. He is said in Galatians ii., 20, to dwell in us, as God is said to dwell in his people. By him (Ephesians ii., 1-6) we are quickened from the dead to spiritual life; and at the sound of his voice, as Paul has it, at the last day all men will be called forth from the grave. Such statements cannot be made without an implication of Christ's deity.

Finally, Christ's deity is reflected in the life he is said to have led. Already we see the deity revealed in the birth-narrative. The story of Christ's birth is not that of a natural, but of a supernatural person, the supernatural being not merely implied in the general run of the narrative, but explicitly stated. When Luke mentions the fact of the angel's foretelling to Mary that she was to be with child of the Holy Ghost, he records the angel as saying: "For this reason (*i. e.*, just because of the parentage of God), that Holy Thing which shall be born of thee shall be called Son of God." The passage loses all its force, the reason ceases to be a reason, if we ascribe anything less than deity to Christ.

Matthew records the angel as saying that the child should be called Immanuel, God-with-us. As Matthew speaks of this in connection with the wonderful birth of Christ, it can scarcely be doubted that he meant to ascribe deity to Christ. For how could that child in itself be "God-with-us" and not be divine? This statement of Matthew has the more force if we bear in mind that Matthew was not educated in the doctrine of modern

theology, which teaches that there is something divine in each of us. Again, in verse 21 of the same chapter, the angel says: "Thou shalt call his name Jesus, for he shall save his people from their sins." The angel there alludes to a statement in Psalm cxxx., where it is said that God should redeem Israel from their iniquities. In the New Testament Jesus is substituted for God, which fact shows that Jesus was conceived of here as God.

Now the record of Christ's birth as proof of his deity, though more or less debatable in so far as the Synoptic record is concerned, is fully substantiated by the testimony given thereto by John. In the opening words of his Gospel he says that the Word which *is God* was made flesh and dwelt among us. Paul, in a similar passage in Galatians iv., 4, says: "But when the fulness of time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman," thereby testifying to the metaphysical Sonship of the son of Mary.

So also the account of Christ's life, as given by the four Evangelists in common, can lead to no other conclusion than that they conceived of Christ as God. "No man ever lived

as he lived; no man ever spoke as this man spoke." His whole life's conduct, from the cradle to the grave, was one grand reflection, not merely of a spotless human character, but of the divine in him. The life he led, the words he spoke, the wonders he did in imitation of the Father, the command he exercised over the forces of nature—all show we are here dealing with some one divine. Christ cannot be a creature of the Evangelists' fancy. He cannot be a product of their imagination. It lies entirely beyond the reach of possibility for a human being to picture from imagination the life of a divine being. The Evangelists could only record "the things which they had seen and heard." That the writers not merely unconsciously taught Christ's deity in the portrait they drew of his life, but that they themselves were impressed by the fact that Christ's life was that of one divine, I think is evident from their acquiescing in the opinion of Peter, when he said, concluding from the life of Christ: "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God"; and from John's statement, that "these things were written,

that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God."

In like manner Christ's death, which is but the culmination of his godlike life, is expressive of his deity. Not as regards that death in itself, for in so far as Christ could die he was not God; but as to the manner in which he died. This already is plain from the fact that the Evangelists record Jesus as saying that he had power to lay down his life and power to take it up again, a power not given to man, but a prerogative only of him, who is Lord of Life. And Christ *laid down* his life. It was not torn from him. The manner in which he died, and the circumstances attending, impressed bystanders so with a feeling of his deity that the Roman centurion exclaimed: "Truly, this was a Son of God." This statement has worth for us here, not so much as embodying the centurion's belief, for he could only conceive of this Son of God after his heathen fashion, but for what Matthew and Mark wish to bring out by it. For the statement clearly implies that what to the writers was a fact impressed itself as such even upon the mind of the Roman centurion.

Christ's resurrection is another proof of his deity. In so far as it was a resurrection from the dead, it was a token of his humanity. But especially as to the fact that God, by raising Christ from the dead, set His seal to all the claims Christ during life had made to deity, does the resurrection testify to the deity of Christ. In this manner Paul finds in the resurrection a proof of Christ's deity, when he says in Romans i., 4: "And declared to be *the Son of God* with power, according to the Spirit of Holiness, by the resurrection from the dead."

From these facts I think it is clear that the New Testament writers—all of them—teach the deity of Christ, that they could not have said what they did say without holding the deity of Christ, that the deity of Christ was not merely an object of belief along with many others, but formed part of the substratum upon which their religious teachings were based, was a presupposition from which they all started out.



# DO THE EVANGELISTS REPRESENT CHRIST AS HIMSELF TEACH- ING HIS DEITY?

*First Essay.*

By JOHANNES DANIEL ROOS.

OUR question at once clearly marks out the field of our investigation. The immediately preceding paper has proved that the mass of the New Testament writers not only believed in Christ as a Divine Person, but also held his divinity as a fundamental truth which pervaded their minds and their writings—both explicitly and implicitly—in the portraits they have severally drawn of him. At this stage, however, we come in contact with modern criticism, throwing up this difficulty,—that we cannot receive the testimony of the apostles as an unbiased account, and indeed not even that of the earlier tradition, on which their accounts seem partially to rest. They are prejudiced in all they have to say about Jesus, inas-

much as he is acknowledged by them as their Lord and Master, and is believed in by them as divine.

We are therefore called upon to distinguish between what these apostles teach concerning Jesus, and what he himself has taught about his own Person; that is, in the Gospels to sift out the self-testimony of Jesus from the representations given of him by his followers and devotees. We shall, therefore, in the Gospel narratives turn exclusively to the words of Jesus himself, and hope on that foundation to prove adequately that our Lord is represented not only as having thought, but as having actually taught, that he was the Messiah, the Christ, the Son of God, yea, himself God, in the most striking and clearest terms. The further question, whether what we find in these words laid on the lips of Christ is actually his own, or merely the subjective convictions of the evangelists attributed to him, falls beyond our range, and will be treated subsequently.

Investigating then the self-testimony of Jesus, as recorded by the evangelists, we find, as a first step, that in his very earliest youth

(Luke ii., 49),—the only reference to that period of his life, enveloped in the mists of the mysteriously unknown and silent, we have recorded in the Gospels—he is clearly conscious of his unique relation to God as his Father. “Wist ye not,” says he, “that I must be about my Father’s business?” It is hardly possible that at such an early age he could have believed himself to be the heaven-sent Son, had he not been that in reality. Accordingly we find him opening his ministerial activities by boldly applying to himself in the synagogue at Nazareth the Messianic prophecy of Isaiah lxi., 1; for in Luke iv., 17 sq. we read that after having read from this prophet the passage: “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, . . . and the acceptable year of the Lord,” he sat down and uttered these solemn words: “This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears.” Moreover, not long after this public declaration we find Jesus at the well of Sychar, on his way to Galilee, definitely declaring to the Samaritan woman that he is the

Messiah, the Christ, when to the inquiring woman who said: "I know that the Messiah cometh, which is called Christ," Jesus answered: "I that speak unto thee am he."

But by way of a stepping-stone to our final resolution, if not part of the very foundation of the argument itself, let us try to ascertain whether our Lord made any claim to a pre-existent state, whether he was conscious of a life beyond the soil of Palestine; thus working up our way to a clear conception of his personal oneness with the Father. Such a pre-existence of Christ is not only latent in most of the New Testament passages having reference to him, but is also explicitly and clearly taught by the Saviour himself. In the first place we find Jesus, in John viii., teaching before his countrymen in the temple, where the indictment of the Jews, that he made himself greater than Abraham and the prophets, drew from his lips this solemn phrase: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, before Abraham *was* (lit. became) I *am*." What does this mean? Christ professes here simple existence, without beginning or end. Abraham came into being at some definite time (he became); our Lord

not so, he is from eternity: "*I am.*" This then claims not only pre-existence, but also displays a consciousness of eternal Being. The "*I am*" of verse 24 seems to point back to the Jehovah of the Covenant of ancient Israel: "*I am that I am*" (Ex. iii., 14). He knows no past or future, he is the eternal now. That this is the plain sense of the words is perhaps further evident from the immediate hostile attitude of the Jews, who resolved to stone him for blasphemy.

In the second place we have the strongest of testimonies for this consciousness of a prior state of glory from which our Lord had come, and to which he was then about to return, in his own words (John xvii., 5): "And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self, with the glory which I had with thee before the world was." So clear and full of solemn import is this reference in the great intercessory prayer of our Saviour, offered up on the eve of his crucifixion, that we may pass on without further comment. In a similar way, had space permitted, we might have adduced numerous other texts, *e. g.*, John iii., 13; vi., 62; viii., 23, etc., all bearing on this

subject, and adding weight to our argument. But these few concrete instances may suffice. It is evident that this is a truth of the greatest moment, for if it be denied, "we have in Jesus Christ at most the deification of the human, not the incarnation of the divine; man become God, not God become man." In these and similar sayings of Jesus, then, adequate evidence is supplied for his pre-existence. In the words of King we say: "Indeed the evidence of this truth is not confined to them alone, it is forthcoming in the general tenor of his teaching respecting himself. Even when we do not *hear* his direct testimony to his pre-existent glory, we *overhear* it. He who claims an absolute and exclusive knowledge of the Father, who speaks on all matters of highest moment with an authority which no one is permitted to question, who makes the acceptance or rejection of himself the hinge on which the destiny of men turns, and who presents himself as the final judge of mankind, cannot, we instinctively feel, have an existence which reaches no further back than Bethlehem. In him there must be, there *is*, the appearance of the eternal in time." It

is to be admitted, of course, that pre-existence is not necessarily deity. On the contrary, some acknowledge Christ's pre-existence, and yet deny his true and proper Godhead. But this raises such grave difficulties that the position is today generally abandoned; and modern theologians are aware that, to vindicate their naturalistic view of his Person, they are obliged to make his existence begin with the nativity in Bethlehem.

We go a step further, then, trying to prove that Christ also considered himself essentially *one* with the Father. For this we think we find ample ground in our Lord's words recorded in John viii., 42: "I proceeded forth and came from (lit. out of) God." This expression, presupposing the pre-existence, seems, almost beyond doubt, to express his relationship to the Father in such a manner as to be explicable only in terms of his true and proper Godhead. For on closer examination it will be seen that the preposition used in the original, "with God" is not that meaning "from the side of," nor yet "away from," but that meaning "out of," which can only mean out of God as the origin. The



relation is therefore a highly metaphysical one. The explanation placed on these words by Bishop Westcott is this: they "can only be interpreted of the true divinity of the Son, of which the Father is the source and fountain." Again in John x., 30, Christ declares: "I and the Father are *one*," where, in view of his preceding argument, this can only mean "one" in the guarantee of the safety of the sheep belonging to his fold, thus a oneness not only in the ethical sense, but a oneness of power, of nature. Godet says: "Here the thought of Jesus rises still higher, even to the notion of a unity of nature, whence arises unity of will, power, and property."

The data thus secured seem to justify us in saying that Christ is both a distinct pre-existent Personality, and substantially one with Deity. As such, therefore, being himself God, we find him claiming to be without sin. This claim radiates forth from the whole tenor of his teaching. Compare him, for example, with his predecessors: they all, from Moses to the latest of the prophets, confess weakness, shortcomings, and even sins. Or with his successors, amongst whom we find Paul, whom so many

wish to exalt even above Christ himself, exclaiming: "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from this body of death?" Of all this there is not a word, not even the slightest trace, in the teachings of Christ. He never even so much as hints at a distinction between his official and his personal self. Nay, further, he makes morality not something relative, but absolute, placing before his hearers the highest possible, the perfect standard: "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect" (Matt. v., 48). Not only, however, is our Lord's perfect sinlessness implicit in his words, but he even makes a direct and explicit claim to it, when in John viii., 46, he positively challenges the Jews: "Which of you convinceth me of sin?"

A second characteristic is not less striking than the one just examined, and can perhaps be explained only from his sinless nature, to wit, the attitude of superiority he assumes towards the Pharisees, the Scribes, the Prophets, the hallowed Jewish tradition, and even the inviolable law of Moses itself. The Scribes and Rabbis always appealed to prior and higher authorities; the

prophetic language runs: "Thus saith the Lord." But Jesus assumes all authority to himself, and we hear him speak in such language as this: "Verily, verily, *I* say unto you"; an attitude to be compared not with that of Moses or any of the prophets, but only with that of God himself. Accordingly we find Christ already early in his ministry claiming the power of forgiving sins. When the sick of the palsy was brought into his presence, he said unto him: "Son, be of good cheer, thy sins are forgiven thee." Nor did he rest content with the mere uttering of these words, to which the Scribes took objection, accusing him in their hearts of blasphemy. In the most emphatic manner he asserts this power of forgiving sins and cleansing men's hearts. For to their unspoken censure he answers: "Whether is easier, to say, Thy sins are forgiven; or to say, Arise, and walk? But that ye may know that the Son of Man hath power on earth to forgive sins (then saith he to the sick of the palsy), Arise, take up thy bed and go unto thy house. And he arose and departed to his house" (Matt. ix., 2-7).

But the culminating declarations of Christ

as to his divine sonship perhaps yet remain to be adduced. This title, the *Son of God*, becomes, especially in John, Jesus' own designation, constantly on his lips. In the 25th verse of chapter v. he says: "The dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and shall live." In ix., 35-7, he makes the most direct statement as to this. Meeting the man whose sight he had restored, and whom the Jews had then cast out, he asked him: "Dost thou believe on the Son of God?" The man answered: "Who is he, Lord?" Whereupon Jesus replied: "Thou hast both seen him, and it is he that talketh with thee." There are many more passages, not to mention those in which our Lord speaks of God peculiarly as "the" or "my" Father, never "our" Father, thus never placing himself alongside of the disciples.

But this designation is not limited to John's Gospel, as some critics would have it. The Synoptics indeed seem to strike the keynote here. It is perhaps met with in its fullest significance in Matt. xi., 27—also Luke x., 22, which contains the same pregnant statement, only slightly changed in form—where the very germ of the Incarnation-mystery seems to be

imbedded: "All things are delivered unto me of my Father, and no man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal Him." What this on the face of it teaches is a complete knowledge of the Son by the Father, and of the Father by the Son. The Son should thus be infinite in his attributes to compass the boundless depths of the Father. The mutual knowledge of Father and Son seems to be of the same absolute kind; and what is more, others shall know the Father only in so far as the Son may think fit to reveal Him.

It is impossible to believe that we have here in the one the ever-living God, and in the other a mere human being, however exalted he may be. It is therefore not surprising to find that Christ in the closing verses of this Gospel claims to be a sharer in the Trinity of the Godhead. "Having declared his intercommunion with the Father, who is the Lord of heaven and earth, Jesus here asserts that all authority has been given him in heaven and earth, and asserts a place for himself in the precincts of the ineffable Name. Here is a

claim not merely to a deity in some sense equivalent to, and as it were alongside of, the deity of the Father, but to a deity in some high sense one with the deity of the Father."

Finally, in this capacity Christ claims for himself the divine prerogative of judgment. In John v., 22, he declares that "the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son." The climax, however, is reached in the judgment scene in Matt. xxv., where Christ announces himself as the sole judge of all men at his second coming. This clearly is a distinct claim to divinity, for no work can be more exclusively divine in its very essence: "When the Son of Man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory: and before him shall be gathered all the nations, and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth the sheep from the goats." To the former the King shall say: "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." But the latter he shall turn from his presence with the words: "Depart from me, ye cursed, into

everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels. . . . These shall go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into life eternal."

*Second Essay.*

By FRANK MACKEY RICHARDSON.

EACH one of the Evangelists presents to us a Divine Christ. Matthew, while he does not devote as much space to his Divinity as does John, gives us a Christ who could only be God, if he taught and acted as he presents him; so also with Luke and Mark. The style and strain in which he perpetually spoke is as weighty as any of his declarations.

Christ openly claimed to be the Son of God according to the Synoptics (Matt. xxvi., 64, and Luke xxii., 69-71). In the instance narrated here Christ is being questioned by Caiaphas, and, being asked if he is the Son of God, replies, "Thou hast said. Nevertheless I say unto you, Henceforth ye shall see the Son of man sitting at the right hand of power and



coming on the clouds of heaven." In Matt. xxvii., 43, we read, "He trusted in God, let Him deliver him now, if He desireth him, for he said, I am the Son of God." The 44th verse testifies that even the robber called him the Son of God, and Christ, as in the above passage, accepted the title and in this instance sealed it with his own blood.

Christ is also represented as claiming supremacy in both worlds (Matt. xiii., 41-42). "The Son of man shall send forth his angels and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that cause stumbling and them that do iniquity, and shall cast them into a furnace of fire: there shall be the weeping and the gnashing of teeth." Here he has a kingdom and is attended by a retinue of angels. He is to preside at the judgment and cast the causers of stumbling and the doers of iniquity into the furnace (Matt. xxv., 31-32). "But when the Son of man shall come in his glory and all the angels with him, then shall he sit on the throne of his glory: and before him shall be gathered all the nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as the shepherd separateth the sheep from the goats; and he shall set the

sheep on his right hand but the goats on his left." And (Matt. xxv., 34), "then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." And in the 41st verse, "Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me ye cursed into the eternal fire which is prepared for the devil and his angels." "And these shall go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life" (Matt. xxv., 46). Here he is the supreme Judge, sending the righteous to heaven and the unrighteous to eternal punishment. His power is supreme, he is conscious of it at all times, in fact he states it without equivocation in Matt. xxviii., 18, "And Jesus came to them and spake unto them saying, All authority hath been given unto me in heaven and on earth." He is the absolute Judge. In his hands is all authority. Can we think of God being any more powerful? He is the final and absolute court of all decisions.

In his great sermon on the mount Christ claimed to be the great teacher come with a message. Seven times in one chapter does he

use the form, "But I say unto you" (Matt. v., 20, 22, 28, 32, 34, 39, 44). In Matt. vii., 24, he says that it is the wise man who hears these sayings and does them. Also Matthew describes him as teaching with authority (Matt. vii., 29). "For he taught them as one having authority and not as their scribes." In Matt. xii., 8, Mark ii., 28, and Luke vi., 5, he puts aside the Jewish Sabbath and tells men unhesitatingly that he is Lord of the Sabbath. Possibly at no time is he more emphatic than here, and this is recorded by all the Synoptics. Further in Matt. xxviii., 19-20, "Go ye therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I commanded you, and lo, I am with you always." Here all the world is to learn of his teachings; all the converted are to be baptized not only in the name of the Father and the Holy Spirit, but also in his name; and he is going to be present with them even unto the end of the world. Could God have promised more? Is it not an evidence of his own inner consciousness?

Christ heals men of their sins, as in Mark ii., 5-7, where he says to the one sick of the palsy, on seeing their faith, "Son, thy sins be forgiven thee," and in verse 10, "that ye may know that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins, he saith to the sick of the palsy, I say unto thee, Arise, and take up thy bed, and go into thine house. And immediately he arose, took up the bed, and went forth before them all; insomuch that they were all amazed, and glorified God, saying, We never saw it on this fashion." The Jews said that no one save God can forgive sins. Christ not only claimed power on earth to forgive sins, but in order to establish his claims he went so far as to seal his claim to supernatural power by performing this physical cure. Further claims are made in Matthew, in that he can heal all our soul's diseases. "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn of me, for my yoke is easy and my burden is light" (Matt. xi., 28-30). And again, "All things have been delivered unto me of my Father, and no one knoweth the Son save the Father, neither doth any one know

the Father save the Son and he to whomsoever the Son willeth to reveal Him." Luke x., 22, also records this remarkable claim as presented by Christ. He is on a par with his Father which is just as deep a mystery. Our eternal destiny depends upon whether we accept or reject him. "Every one therefore who shall confess me before men, him will I also confess before my Father who is in heaven, but whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father who is in heaven." Who but one that is in touch with God and holds the keys to his opinions can make any such claims?

So far we have occupied ourselves with the Christ that Matthew, Mark and Luke give us. We find in him a Judge of both worlds of omnipotent power, and a teacher come from God. He offers peace and comfort to the human soul and presents himself as our burden-bearer. His mystery of Sonship is as great as that of his Father. He is the mediator between God and man and all nations must be taught of him and baptized in his name. Could the Synoptics have presented a more divine Christ? Could they have invented such complex claims?

It is admitted by all that John presents a Christ that is God. It is our purpose now to show that it is the same Christ that the Synoptics portray. In his interview with Nicodemus, Jesus expressly declares his divinity. "He that believeth on him is not judged, but he that believeth not hath been judged already because he hath not believed on the name of the only begotten Son of God" (John iii., 18). Also (verse 16), "For God so loved the world that He gave his only begotten Son that whosoever believeth on him should not perish but have eternal life." In Matthew he is presented as the final and absolute Judge and in John he is the one to give away the mansions on high (John xiv., 1-3), "Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you." He also claimed to have absolute power over his own life. "No one taketh it away from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down and I have power to take it again. This commandment received I from my Father" (John x., 18). Also he claimed that

those even then that should hear his voice should live (John v., 25), "Verily, verily, I say unto you, the hour is coming and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live." Also as in the Synoptics he is made the eternal Judge. "For neither doth the Father judge any man, but he hath given all judgment unto the Son" (John v., 22). "Marvel not at this: for the hour cometh in which all that are in the tombs shall hear his voice" (John v., 28). Again in John he claims to have power to bestow eternal life (John iv., 14). "But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall become in him a well of water springing up unto eternal life."



# DID JESUS TEACH HIS OWN DEITY?

## *First Essay.*

By WILLIAM ARTHUR MOTTER.

THE question, whether Jesus taught his deity, is a purely historical one and must be approached in the attitude of historical investigation. We must examine the evidence, and on the basis of an honest investigation draw our conclusions. We must approach the question with an open mind. To have our minds made up at the outset that Jesus was not God is to approach the question with a bias which is bound to affect our conclusions. On the other hand, our conclusions must not be colored by the fact that the records with which we deal profess to be inspired and therefore infallible. We approach such evidence as we approach any other historical evidence, and accept it for what it is worth.

The question with which we are concerned is a very important one. We have already seen that from the very beginning the Chris-

tian Church has believed in the deity of Jesus Christ. We have also seen that the Church has represented Jesus as teaching his own deity. Apart, then, from the question whether Jesus is divine, if we can show that Jesus did teach his deity we have an explanation for the belief and teaching of the early Church; but if Christ did not teach his deity, then the Jesus of the Christian Church is not the real Jesus, and the Church of Christ has been laboring for nineteen centuries under a great delusion.

An answer to the question, Did Jesus teach his deity? must carry us back to the Christ who walked and talked upon the earth. We shall therefore be concerned with two questions: the evidence, and its trustworthiness.

An examination of the evidence reveals, in the first place, that our only source of information for the life and teaching of Christ is the literature of the early Christian Church, namely, the accounts of Jesus as found in the four canonical Gospels.

We learn, in the second place, that these four Gospels were written by men who were in a position to know whereof they wrote. Two of these documents, the Gospel according

to Matthew, and the Gospel according to John, come from men who were known to have been companions of Christ during the greater part of his public ministry; men who were in a position to portray accurately the scenes in the life of Christ which they had witnessed with their own eyes, and to record the words which they had heard with their own ears. Mark, the writer of the second Gospel, is known to have been a companion of Peter who himself was an eye-witness and played a leading *rôle* among the followers of Christ. Concerning Luke, the author of the third Gospel, we know that he was an educated Greek physician, a companion of Paul. A study of his Gospel has convinced scholars that he is a careful and accurate historian, and we have little reason to doubt his procedure as set forth in the prologue of his Gospel, in which he tells us that he gathered his materials for his Gospel from those "who from the beginning were eye-witnesses and ministers of the Word." "Having traced the course of all things accurately from the first," he says, "I write unto you, most excellent Theophilus, that thou mightest know the certainty

concerning the things wherein thou wast instructed." Such, then, were the qualifications of the men who profess to record for us the life and teachings of Jesus Christ. From the previous papers we have already learned that these records represent Jesus as teaching his deity, not only by implied statements, but out and out, in so many words; not in a few isolated passages, but over and over again in unmistakable terms.

We find, in the third place, that these records carry us back close to the events they profess to record. In our search for the primitive Jesus we may for the time being disregard the Gospel of John, which comes from toward the close of the first century, and confine our attention to the Synoptists who present our earliest extant witness to the teachings of Christ. It is generally agreed that the Synoptic Gospels were written before 80 A.D., and there seems little reason to doubt that they were written before the fall of Jerusalem in 70 A.D. But even taking the later of the two dates, the evidence carries us back to within fifty years of the death of Christ, and comes from men who were either eye-wit-

nesses or contemporaneous with the events they record. This means that the Gospels were written at a time when the life and teaching of Christ were still fresh in the world, when we have every reason to believe that had the facts recorded not been true, they would have been refuted by the Jewish world, which was very bitter towards the claims of Christ. For example, taking an instance that bears directly upon our question, the Gospel records tell us that Jesus was condemned before the Sanhedrin because he taught that he was the Son of God. Here is the record of a fact that could easily have been refuted, and we have every reason to believe would have been refuted, were it not true.

These, then, are the documents which provide the data for the student of history, documents which clearly represent Jesus as teaching his own deity. In the face of their representations of Jesus we ask the question, Can we believe that Jesus taught his deity? Our question emerges as a small part of a greater question, the trustworthiness of the Gospel record. The teaching of Christ is inseparable from his life. His words form an integral part of the

Gospel narrative. So close is this relation that the record of his words and the record of his deeds stand or fall together. Can we trust the portrait of Christ which we find in the Gospel record? Does it represent the real Jesus? Did Jesus claim for himself the high place he holds in the minds of his first followers? Did he do as they say, claim that he was God?

Liberal theology tells us today that Christianity was founded by Paul, that Paul transformed the message of the Kingdom which Christ brought, namely, the "Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of Man," into a message which centered in the person of a Christ who was regarded as divine. Examine the Epistles of Paul, which for the most part are earlier than the Gospels, and you have a Christianity centering in the death, the resurrection, and the atonement of Christ the Son of God. Search for the teaching of Jesus, and it is surprisingly lacking. We find the early Church emerging with a strong belief in the deity of Christ. Perhaps this belief, which antedates the Gospel record, was read back into the life of Christ, and colored the

portrait which his first followers have given us in the Gospels. If this is true, then we want to get back to the real Jesus.

Liberal theology tells us that the primitive Jesus was a human Jesus: that the divine Jesus was the product of the Church. If this is true, then is the Jesus who teaches his deity also a product of the Church? Jülicher says, "Even the earliest tradition cannot be assumed to be free from the bias of the first interpreters." "The sources as we have them now," says Wernle, "are not free from the possibility of modification and adulteration. They represent the belief of the Christians as it developed through four decades." Johannes Weiss tells us that a study of the Gospel of Mark reveals two pictures of Jesus: one representing him as purely human, the other as a God to whom all things are possible; and with the peculiar bias of the liberal school, he tells us that the human Jesus is the earlier, the true Jesus: the divine Jesus is the product of the Church. Wrede tells us that Jesus was not Messiah and did not wish to be, but after the resurrection the disciples began to believe that he was divine, and hence they came to the



conclusion that he must have taught his Messiahship, though at first only in a hidden way. Hence in the Gospel of Mark, which is regarded as the earliest Gospel, he finds the beginning of the tendency to represent Jesus as teaching his deity. Accordingly we meet with such statements as these: "and he suffered not the demons to speak" (i., 34); "and he charged them that no man should know this" (v., 43). And, after the great confession at Cæsarea Philippi, "he charged them that they should tell no man of him" (viii., 30). This is only the beginning of the tendency which we find culminating in the fourth Gospel, where Jesus is represented as openly teaching his Messiahship.

If the theory of the liberal theologians is true, then our task as historians, seeking for the words of Christ in regard to himself, is the task of separating the late element, the mythical element, the element which the Church has read backward into the life of Christ, from the primitive Jesus, the human Jesus. We may search for the primitive Jesus along two different lines. We may, by a liter-

ary study of the documents, seek to get back of the present documents, and thus find a more primitive Jesus; or we may, by some subjective test, seek to eliminate the true from the false and thus arrive at a true Jesus.

Taking up a literary study of the Gospels, we find that the three Synoptists stand intimately related, and back of them there seem to be even more primitive sources. Critical schools today are generally agreed upon two primitive sources. The first, commonly called Ur-Markus, lying back of our present Mark, (or according to some identical with our present Mark), and taken over almost bodily by Matthew and Luke. Besides this there is a second source, commonly called the *Logia* source, to which are traced passages common to Matthew and Luke not found in Mark. This is sometimes believed to have been the original Gospel of Matthew in Aramaic. Granting that these sources actually existed, and that the Synoptists used them, we would naturally expect them to represent the sources from which they were borrowed. If such is the case, then we have fragments embedded in our present Gospels which carry us back

“one literary generation” nearer the life of Christ. Confining our attention then to the fragments of these primitive sources embedded in the Gospels, namely, those portions common to Matthew and Luke which are found in Mark, as representative of Ur-Markus, and those portions common to both, but not found in Mark, as representative of the Logia source, what do we find? We find a portrait of a Jesus whose life and teachings correspond exactly to the portrait of the whole Gospels. We find no evidence in these fragments of a Jesus who is regarded as less divine, or who does not teach his deity. As far back then as literary criticism can carry us, we find only one Jesus, a Jesus who both regards himself as divine, and teaches his own deity.

Literary criticism fails to reveal a Jesus who does not teach his deity. We have yet to follow out the results of historical criticism in its attempt to separate the mythical and ideal elements in the Gospels from the true. The great problem which confronts the historical student now, is that of finding some adequate test by which he can eliminate all but

the true. What is to be this standard? Harnack says: "Whoever has a good eye, and a true sense of the really great, must be able to see it and distinguish between the kernel and the transitory husk." Pfeiderer mentions, "Healthy eyes." Bousset asks, "Is it psychologically comprehensible?" Some one else says, "What could not have been invented." It is just here that so much of our so-called historical criticism has failed. Liberal theologians have approached the question with minds already made up that the true Jesus was a human Jesus. To find the true Jesus they only need some standard by which the divine element can be eliminated. Convinced at the outset that Jesus was not divine, they tell us that Jesus was deified by his followers. If you would find the true Jesus, says Schmiedel, reject everything in the Gospels that is not contradictory to the idea of worship—and what do you have left? In the first instance, five, or possibly nine passages, holding before us a Jesus who could not possibly account for the Gospel portrait: a Jesus who says nothing about his deity.

To approach our question squarely and

without prejudice, we must at least be willing to admit the possibility that Jesus was divine and taught his deity. Suppose we begin by admitting such a possibility, and at once Schmiedel's standard must be ruled out, for it involves the very point at issue. He tells us that the followers of Christ worshipped him; but suppose Christ was really divine, then would it be wrong to worship him, or would the Gospel record be any the less true because Christ, who was God, was worshipped as God? Johannes Weiss finds two distinct portraits of Christ in the Gospel of Mark: a human Christ, and a divine Christ; and because he does not believe that Christ was divine he holds on to the human Christ and discards the deified Christ. But suppose Jesus was what the Church has always believed him to be, both God and man, then his criterion must be discarded. Start with your mind made up that there never was a divine Jesus, and historical criticism can yield but one result: a Jesus who did not teach his deity. The man whose mind is made up at the outset, in the words of Kalthoff, "leaves of the words of Christ only what he

can make use of according to his preconceived notions of what is historically possible. Lacking every historical definiteness, the name of Jesus becomes an empty vessel into which every theologian pours his own thoughts and ideas."

Liberal theology starts with a Jesus who is human, but the human Jesus of liberal theology leaves all the facts unexplained. Granted that Jesus was mere man, how account for the Gospel? If Jesus were mere man, then our Gospel is a myth and we have no way of getting back to the real Jesus. If the Gospel is a myth, if the Church invented the divine Christ, it must have invented his words in which he teaches his deity. If this be true, how explain the belief of the early Church? Apart now from the fact as to whether Jesus were divine or not, we cannot explain the belief of the Church in his deity, or in the fact that he teaches his deity, if he did not teach it. The conclusions of liberal criticism do not do justice to the facts. After liberal criticism has said its last word, we have a Gospel in which Jesus teaches his own deity, and that Gospel must be explained. If Christ

did not teach his deity, then the Gospel which represents him both as divine and as teaching his deity is more wonderful and more difficult to explain than the life it records.

The facts of the Gospel need an explanation. We must do one of two things: regard the Gospel as historical, or give up the whole record. But the latter alternative is not necessary. "It might be reassuring to us as historians," says Dr. Denney, "to find that there are passages in the Gospels which no worshipper of Jesus could have invented, which were data to the Evangelists and which we are safe in counting historical." This is the problem to which he devotes himself in the greater part of his *Jesus and the Gospel*. Going back to the documents, which critics find embedded in the Gospels, and which they designate as the earliest representations of Jesus, he searches out those passages which could not possibly have been invented by the followers of Christ, in which Jesus is represented either as conscious of, or as teaching his deity. He reminds us at the outset that, "The force of the argument does not depend on any single passage, but on the cumulative effect of the



whole." For the student of history who approaches the question with open mind the numerous passages which he cites are conclusive proof that, regardless of whether or not Jesus was divine, he regarded himself as divine and taught his own deity.

In conclusion, we remark in the words of Professor Gwatkin: "If we know anything for certain about Jesus of Nazareth, it is that he steadily claimed to be the Son of God, Redeemer of Mankind, and the Ruler of the world to come; and by that claim the Gospel stands or falls."

### *Second Essay.*

By WILLIAM NICOL.

THIS question now leads us a step further back in our discussion. The first pair of papers have shown that the Christian Church does now teach, and always has taught, the deity of Christ, upon the strength of the presupposed fact that such was also the teaching of the New Testament. The second pair of

papers then proceeded to investigate this previously presupposed teaching, and showed that all the New Testament writers do really teach the deity of Christ, in their turn making the supposition that Jesus really did utter this teaching. Our question now takes up this supposition, and asks whether the teaching of the New Testament writers is established on such a historical fact, as that of Jesus himself teaching his deity, or whether their teaching may not have arisen later from other causes. If we may anticipate somewhat to show the connection, we might say that the next and final paper will again have to go behind this, and, taking it for granted that Jesus did teach his deity, ask whether he was right in doing so, and whether there was no deception or self-delusion in the case.

What amount of evidence do you suppose a historian would require to establish on sound historical principles the fact that nineteen hundred years ago a certain man lived who, whether he was right or wrong, taught his own deity? Some people seem to want to go to work with nothing but their five senses, and require of us that we shall present facts,

or rather objects, which will appeal to those senses in such a way as to demonstrate conclusively what we have to prove. If that is your demand the task is hopeless, for you are asking something which it is beyond the power of any system of historical investigation to reach.

In making this concession I would, however, remark that on your basis of demonstration every past fact of history would be disproved, or to say the very least, it would become impossible to establish securely any such fact. If you refuse to make use of recorded testimony after your best efforts to prove that it is not authentic have failed, well then there simply is no more history existing for you. Then it is no use granting that a man must have lived because you see a monument erected to his memory, because there is almost as much chance of the erection of a false monument as of the publication of a false book. Why, at that rate you cannot even prove that Napoleon ever lived, and some people would be thrown into serious doubt about those of their ancestors who died before their birth. It seems that even the extremely up-to-date

sworn testimony of a photograph would not be worth much. You noticed in the papers a short while ago, that a certain Mr. Gompers of Chicago was accused of standing on the Stars and Stripes while addressing a socialistic meeting in that city. To substantiate this accusation, a photograph was produced of Mr. Gompers holding forth to his men with his feet upon the flag. This looks very serious, but no, Mr. Gompers' attorney finds an expert photographer who proves that the photograph was faked, and Mr. Gompers is saved.

It would appear, then, that it is neither fair nor possible to conduct a historical investigation upon such a basis, and with these demands. We have a right, and it is our duty, to examine our data before we formulate our historical scheme; but if we ever wish to accomplish anything, we will have to put a certain amount of faith in others, and make use of the facts which they had a better opportunity of ascertaining, and have recorded for us. The difficulty seems to have arisen because certain people who turn their attention to the person of Christ have previously made up

their minds as to what can possibly happen and what cannot possibly happen. When such a student is confronted by the fact of a widely distributed community, the Christian Church, which universally believes in the deity of her Christ, he at first decides that this bit of superstition must be a late importation. On further investigation, however, he finds that this has been prevalent in the Church for these many centuries, and that it is still supposed to be established on the teaching of the New Testament. He thereupon turns his attention to those writings in the hope of being able to find that they do not really commit themselves to any such doctrine. This, then, also proves a failure, and he simply brushes it aside, and finds himself driven to the conclusion that the mistake is not in the interpretation of the representation, but somewhere in the underlying facts. He is now confronted by his last choice, and has either to decide that the records are at variance with what Jesus taught,—and then it follows that he never taught his deity,—or Jesus was at variance with the facts of the case, in which event he did teach his deity, and was correctly repre-

sented by the Evangelists, but must himself have been a deceiver of the highest ability; for remember that whatever happens, it is the foregone conclusion of our student that God cannot at the same time be man. To save the character, the veracity of Jesus, he has therefore to assume that he has been misrepresented; and having now fixed this, he sets about explaining everything in the light of such a misrepresentation.

So, for instance, P. W. Schmiedel follows the trail of the investigation up to the spot where he has to admit that it was generally held in the early Church of the eighth decade that Christ was God, and that this belief is recorded by the Evangelists—men who were thoroughly acquainted with the whole current of contemporary opinion concerning Jesus. We would now think that Schmiedel has gone so far in admitting this that he will have to go all the way with us, and admit also that Jesus did teach his deity. But not so, for in the very fact that the Evangelists and those on whom they depended were under the spell of the fascinating personality of Jesus, and had learned to make much of him, Schmiedel finds the reason

why they are not to be trusted. Accordingly his revision of the life of Jesus and of his sayings tries to make use of only that which could not be ascribed to the adoration of the writers. In this case, then, the link between truth and later falsehood is not in Jesus himself, for he was faithful in that he did not teach his deity, nor is it in the false interpretation we are putting on the writings of the Evangelists, for it is admitted that our exegesis is on the whole correct, but it is just in the connection between Jesus and his immediate followers, who magnified a good man into a God.

Not unlike this is the standpoint of Johannes Weiss, who would also save the character of Jesus at the expense of his deity. He finds the center of the mistaken doctrine in the conversion of Paul, who had himself never seen our Lord, or at least had not been under the influence of his teaching. The conversion of Paul may then have been a purely natural occurrence, resulting from his hostile attitude of mind toward the Christians, which went over into its direct opposite when he fell a victim to sun-stroke on his way to persecute those at Damascus. Immediately turning be-



liever in the resurrection of Christ, who, he thought, had here appeared to him, he becomes the introducer into Christianity of the Logos christology, which was later fully developed in the Christian community to mean that Christ is simply God himself. With this rich meaning Weiss admits that John speaks of the deity of Christ, but Paul himself still meant something lower, while the Synoptists had a Christ in mind who was not much more than, if not purely, human, and only added divine elements to their representation, under the influence of the christology prevalent at the time that they were writing. Here in the case of Weiss it is again clear that the honesty and sanity of Christ, on the one hand, are not doubted; and on the other hand, the ordinary exegesis of the New Testament which finds there a representation of Christ as divine is admitted to be correct; but in between the mistake is supposed to lie, viz., in the way in which the followers of Jesus immediately began to think of him after his death, and in which they consequently represented him as speaking.

With these we may, roughly speaking, class

that group of writers who deny that Jesus ever lived, and attribute the growth of New Testament christology to pure myth, for from that assertion it must necessarily follow that he did not teach his deity either. In this Strauss has been fairly outdone by men like Drews, who are satisfied by the ideal truth represented by Christ, of the approach of man to God, and do not require the historical truth of his life and work. Not totally unlike this speaks Anderson of Dundee in the *Hibbert Journal* when he wishes to show that, though there may have been, and very likely was, a human Jesus to whom the historical part of the narrative relates, other more important parts were derived from the mythologizing faculty of one of those clubs that were prevalent in the Roman Empire at the time, and which wreathed a garland of glory containing "elements of Jewish materialism, Greek philosophy, Oriental cults of dying and rising savior-gods, and the prevalent Roman emperor-worship, around the dim and meagre outlines of a slain Jesus."

All these different views we cannot here consider in the conclusions at which they ar-

rive, but we note that they all have to make the same point to begin with, that, namely, the Evangelists are all radically misrepresenting Jesus.

Let us look at the historical position to see if this could be possible. It is at once clear, and admitted, that as early as the seventies there is a universal and very strong conviction among the Christians of the deity of Christ. This tendency is so strong that the three Synoptists, writing accounts of Jesus about that time, just allow those narratives to overflow with that doctrine. The Ur-Markus, the Logia, or whatever else may lie at the foundation of these Gospels in the form of writings or stereotyped tradition, make it clear that even in the fifties this doctrine must already have been general. Because, whether with Johannes Weiss and others, you think that these Gospels only reflect the then prevalent christology, or with the orthodox party, you think that these Gospels were the memorabilia of some of the disciples about Jesus, in any case they make such vital statements that for them to have passed unchallenged by the Christians is proof enough of their having

been according to the popular mind. Now whatever it was that Jesus did, and for whatever reason he suffered, we cannot make anything of his character if we do not allow that there was some purpose—some one great purpose we would like to say—in his life. Let him have been but human, and let that purpose be but the practice of a simple ethical principle. This, surely, is the least that we can claim as a starting point for all that attached itself to him later.

Now let Paul or the Evangelists come along, and change the person of this human Jesus into that of God, and his purpose from a simple ethical principle to that of the highest religious significance—the salvation of the world. I say change it from man to God, because when Weiss speaks of Paul's intermediate stage, he is simply toning the real question down to make it appear less abrupt. Paul's Jesus is simply God like that of John and the Synoptists, as previous papers have already shown. And this immense change has to be made in forty years! And it has to be made so completely that the Gospels may incorporate it at the end of that time without being

in any way contradicted. Further note, this change has to be effected in the very country, in the first place, where Jesus had lived his simple life, and in the second place, in the lifetime of whole communities that had known him personally. You have to admit this cannot be done; however your feeling against the supernatural objects to an incarnation, your sense of the historically possible rejects this radical change still more. We answer Baur in his own words: "What cannot happen, simply did not happen," and here we hope it is said more correctly than he said it, for here there is no question of the supernatural. It would even seem more logical to deny, with Drews, that Jesus ever lived, than to let him live and be deified thirty years after his death, if he did not claim deity for himself. I leave it to you whether that claim was true or false, but you must at least grant that the subsequent course of events requires that it was made.

Coming to the literary argument, we have to admit at once, as Denney and Anderson, quoted above, have done with vastly different purposes, that we simply cannot come into touch with Jesus as he lived and spoke, through

the Gospels, and yet independently of the writers. If you take the whole matter out of the historical environment, you have to confess that the historical Jesus, if he ever lived, is at the mercy of the writers who can let him act and speak as they like, and create for him a character and self-consciousness just as suits their ulterior purposes. Unless we have writings which we can prove to have come directly from the hand of our Lord, we cannot find him speaking to us more directly than he does in the Gospels. Now this may make investigation difficult for us if we try to come into closer contact with the primitive Jesus, but it makes it impossible for the liberal theologian to separate the primitive Jesus from the picture of him given in the Gospels.

We have already seen that the Evangelists would have been prevented by the surroundings in which they labored from representing Jesus differently from what he appeared to all men to be. When we look at the writers themselves we feel convinced of their ability, and desire, to give a true representation of Christ as he appeared to them. Two of them are supposed to have followed him as dis-

ciples, catching up every word eagerly; three of them are connected with the apostolic circle in which the Christian religion was carried on; Luke, a man with the highest historical sense, had every opportunity of ascertaining the facts from the beginning, and he too is actively employed in the work of the propagation of the new faith. All these claims to qualifications to give a true account the liberals may deny, but they will have to admit that here are four leaders of the early Church who give these mutually corroborative accounts of the life and teaching of Jesus. These accounts show very marked differences from each other, which are clearly due in part to the differences in the natures of the four writers to whom different points appeal, and in part to the fact that the object in writing their Gospels was not always the same. Yet among all this variety there is this essential agreement running through the whole, in regard, namely, to the person of Christ, that he is represented as teaching his own deity, and showing it forth even more clearly in his actions than in his words.

If I may revert to the instance of the faked



photograph mentioned above, I would suggest that if the said Mr. Gompers had been photographed from the four quarters by different parties as he stood on the flag, and if these photographs, falling into the hands of the liberal police, showed the very same scene from such different angles, it would have gone hard with the socialist. He would never have been able to prove that they were all faked. So with the portraits given us by the Evangelists. We agree with the liberals that they give us the same complete man in the same surroundings. But now each of the four adds to this the attribute of complete deity, and that not as an external flag—a badge of office or what you like—but as a second nature, completely present in his person, and so perfectly united in the manifestation of that person with his human nature, that, although a child can distinguish the two, the most severe criticism cannot separate them. Can these portraits be faked? If the police had put this question to different experts, and shown them the four photographs mentioned, and if these experts had then unanimously agreed that they were indeed faked, but one had told us that

the faked part was from the knees downward, while another held that only the ankles had been added with the flag, why, there would have been no case at all!

And so the liberals have gone up and down the Gospel portrait to find the junction between the true and the false. And they claim persistently that they have found it, and that all over the place, but exactly where they cannot decide. And they never will be able to tell, for the simple reason that there is a supernatural unity here. To us it appears clear that the Evangelists are but giving the beautiful portrait as truly as they can, just as it appeared to them, and usually without even asking the question whether Christ really was God.

I have admitted that it is well-nigh impossible from a purely literary standpoint to prove either the agreement or the difference between the historical Jesus and the Christ of the Gospels. But there are a few points which encourage us to decide from the Gospels themselves that their writers intended to report accurately the historical facts which they recall. So the writers in their desire for accuracy give

us some of the words of Jesus which they admit they did not understand, but which they evidently wish to recall as exactly as possible. For example, Luke ix., 44, 45: "He said unto them, the Son of Man shall be delivered up into the hands of men. But they understood not this saying, and it was concealed from them that they should not perceive it, and they were afraid to ask him about this saying." This and the half-dozen parallel passages serve to show the desire of the Gospel writers not to alter any part of the truth, even if it is to their own detriment to state it. They record facts that were evidence of their own weakness and faults. This they do without excuse or apology. As artlessly as children these men, so engrossed in their message, give details which place them in a bad light. Their own reputations are not considered, as they forget themselves in the work of witnessing to such events. They record reproofs of Jesus to themselves because of ignorance, as: "Are ye so without understanding?" (Mark vii., 18; Matt. xv., 16). They record how they misunderstood him, and how he reproved them for forgetting the miracle of the loaves

and the fishes. They tell us freely of the disgraceful scene of James and John and their mother seeking ambitiously the chief place in Christ's kingdom. They tell of the rebuke of Christ to them. They show how they had in their cowardice fled at the arrest of Jesus. Peter was one of the most prominent apostles; yet his failures and faults are fully exposed. All record his great denial. They tell how they were slow to understand, even after the resurrection, and so in every way they give the simple truth as it appeared to them even if it does harm their reputation. It seems to us impossible that these men, who were so careful about such details, could mislead us in a matter so fundamental as the question under discussion.

If you grant us that the Gospels represent Jesus as teaching his deity, we must conclude that Jesus really did do so.

## IS CHRIST GOD?

*First Essay.*

By GERRIT HOEKSEMA.

THE question now before us is, Is Christ God? It will of course be impossible to give this subject anything like a complete treatment in the space at disposal. We must leave untouched much material that might be marshalled in defence of the Christian faith in the deity of Christ. We shall seek only to develop to a certain extent a few points.

It will be necessary at the outset to say a few words as to the data that can serve as the basis of our argument. Our question must be considered not from the standpoint of faith but of pure reason. We can therefore use only such data as ought, in fairness, to be admitted by all candid historical students. The papers on the previous questions give us valuable results upon which any consideration of the present question must be based. It has been proved that the Christian Church has al-

ways taught the deity of Christ, that the New Testament writers uniformly speak of him as God, and that Christ himself claimed to be God. And now the question before us is, Is Christ actually what he claimed to be and was believed to be by his followers?

It will be of importance first of all to ascertain just how much we have a right to assume has been proved by the papers on the immediately preceding question. A positive answer to the question, Did Christ teach his own deity? implies, of course, the historicity of the Jesus of the Gospels. Jesus' claims to deity are not the fabrication of his followers, but he actually made these claims. This does not, however, imply that everything said of him in the Gospels is true. Jesus might have made these claims and yet in many other respects not have been what the Gospels represent him to be. We have no right to assume for instance, without further argument, that Jesus actually worked miracles or that he rose from the grave, and then upon these as yet unproved facts base our argument that he must have been God. There has not even been proved to us a divine or Messianic consciousness in

Jesus, for this would imply that Christ made these claims sincerely, and of course this has not been proved. The only thing proved is that Christ claimed to be God.

A very important question to consider in connection with this subject, a question that must be settled before we can proceed further, is this: Is that side of the Gospel representation of Jesus which pictures him as a man, the human side of that picture, historically trustworthy? If we can establish this it will be much easier to argue plausibly that Christ must have been divine. This historical trustworthiness is, however, not necessarily proved by a positive answer to the previous question. Christ might easily have claimed to be God and yet in many other respects, even as regards his human nature, not have been what the Gospel writers picture him to be. In this paper we propose to assume, however, that the man Jesus actually spoke and acted as he is represented to us in the Gospels. We do this for the following reasons:

First, the papers on the previous question have proved the general trustworthiness of the Gospel writers as historians. And there



can be no doubt whatever that everybody, critics included, would accept the Gospels as reliable historical documents if they had pic-tured to us a merely human Jesus.

Secondly, the previous papers have conclusively proved that it is impossible to get back of the Gospels to a still more primitive Jesus. Many critics now openly admit this. Even those who believe in a merely human Jesus will have to choose between the man Jesus of the Gospels or no Jesus at all. And since the proposition that Christ claimed to be God necessarily implies his historical existence, we must accept the Gospel picture in so far as this represents Jesus as a man among men.

Finally, from the critics' own standpoint, the human side of the Gospel portrait ought to be absolutely reliable. For they tell us that the early Christians made a divine Jesus out of a human Jesus. And the remarkable thing is that in these documents whose avowed purpose it is to exhibit a divine Jesus, we find a large mass of historical material that points not to a divine but to a human Jesus. Of course it is impossible to attribute this incorporation of seemingly contradictory material

to carelessness or *naïveté* on the part of the authors. The Gospel portrait of Christ is too great a masterpiece. No, the critics will have to admit that nothing but absolute honesty, absolute regard for the historical facts, could have made the Gospel writers incorporate into their picture a mass of material which seems to contradict their avowed purpose.

Now it may seem as if it will avail us very little in attempting to prove the deity of Christ to prove the trustworthiness of the Gospel picture of his human nature. And yet it is of the greatest importance, for the simple reason that the human Jesus given us by the Gospels is such a man as could not possibly have falsely claimed divine honor. In other words, Jesus is such a man that if he claimed to be God, we must allow that he was God. For if Jesus were a mere man,—or anything we may believe him to be, not God,—then one of two things must be said of him. Either he believed his own claims or he did not believe them. Either his mind was clouded by the most absurd and most irrational illusion that ever darkened mortal mind, or he was the greatest religious impostor in history. Both

of these suppositions are impossible, are in flagrant contradiction to all the historical evidence.

The latter supposition, that Christ made these high claims in spite of his clear consciousness that he was not God, needs very little refutation. Christ's whole life refutes this view, and this theory finds very few, if any, defenders in our day. It is too self-evident to friend and foe alike that the Jesus of the Gospels, whatever he may have been, was not a coarse impostor. All his words and works breathe uprightness, frankness, a sincere love of truth, and a burning hatred of all sham and hypocrisy. He who so fiercely censured the hypocrisy of the Pharisee, who was forever demanding of men that their outer manifestation be in accord with the inner life of their hearts,—are we to believe that he himself was continually making claims which he knew were false? Supposing for a moment that this theory were true, then surely Christ must have had some purpose in making these claims. Do the Gospels give us any clue to this supposed purpose? Do they not rather picture to us a humble man, who peacefully

and unconcernedly goes his way, avoiding the popular favor and never profiting by the passions of the multitude? We never see Christ trying forcibly to impress upon men's minds that they must recognize him as God as we would expect of an impostor. On the contrary, when Peter in the name of all the disciples utters his great confession of faith in Christ as the Son of the living God, Jesus sternly commands them not to speak of it to the masses. And if more proof were needed, would Christ have died for this self-evident lie? Do not his passion, his crucifixion, his death, prove beyond all doubt that Jesus, whatever he may have been, was certainly sincere in his claims?

Driven to this admission, and of course unwilling to confess that Christ was God, recent critics now picture to us a Jesus who was the victim of religious illusions. His was a very religious nature, they tell us; he lived in closer communion with God than any other mortal ever did; and gradually the illusion grew on him that he was in some way God himself. Now the word, illusion, is a very nice word and is purposely selected by the critics. But if

their theory were true, a harsher and more terrible word would be needed to describe Jesus' psychological condition. He would then be no longer a normal-minded man whose harmless illusions about his divinity leave his mental soundness intact. No, he would be an insane fanatic. And it is between these two,—a divine Jesus or an insane Jesus,—that we have to choose.

The critics of course protest loudly against the description of their so-called historical Jesus as an insane person. But if we look the facts honestly and squarely in the face, we can come to no other conclusion. In order to bring the question directly home to us, let us suppose that a young man from the humbler ranks of society were to appear among us and in calm but decisive language claim that he was God. Let us suppose, moreover, that this idea was not a transient, temporary fancy, but, as was the case with Christ, a firm, unshaken belief that seemed to reach down to the innermost roots of his life and controlled all his words and actions. Let us add a few more of the historical touches seen in Christ's life. This young man would then say that whoever had

seen him had seen the Father, that is, God himself. He would claim that at the end of the world he would come upon the clouds of heaven, escorted by heaven's angels, and in all the splendor of divine majesty judge the quick and the dead. Would any doubt that such a young man was insane, always, of course, on the supposition that he was a mere man? Would the critics themselves doubt it? Would not everybody, critics included, laugh in derision at any one who prophesied that this young man was to become the founder of a literally world-conquering movement, and that within fifty years of his death thousands would rather shed their life's blood than renounce their faith in his deity?

We have no right to apply two standards of insanity, one for our age and one for the age in which Christ lived. If such a young man appearing among us is to be declared insane, we must be ready to say the same thing of Jesus. The fact that Jesus lived nineteen hundred years ago must not be allowed to obscure the issue. We must not permit the critics with their literary and rhetorical subtleties to soften down the altogether extraordinary

and stupendous character of Christ's claims. We have here no mere mental exaltation, no partial illusion, no temporary enthusiasm; no, the firmly rooted belief of a mere man that he was God would imply a complete subversion of his whole normal consciousness. It would be a crass contradiction of the deepest intuitions of our nature. To a normal man, nothing is more certain than that he is a mere man, and nothing is further from his mind than the illusion that he is a God.

And yet the critics would have us believe that a mere man could firmly believe this and still not be insane. If a poor man were to believe himself very rich, and if this were an unshaken belief for which he were willing to die if necessary, men would unanimously pronounce him insane. Why? For the simple reason that he believed himself to be the very opposite of what he actually was. But surely the difference between God and man is infinitely greater than the difference between rich and poor. And we must remember that Jesus himself,—this even the critics will admit,—had a very exalted idea of God. He must have realized very clearly what an im-



passable gulf separated God and man. And therefore the illusion on his part that he was God would be a much greater illusion than that of a poor man imagining himself rich. And if the latter is to be pronounced insane, then surely Christ's unshaken but mistaken belief in his Godhead would have carried with it an even greater degree of insanity.

And in point of fact the critics themselves practically admit this. Renan, for instance, in his *Life of Jesus*, protests against the terms insanity and madness as descriptive of Jesus' psychological state. But all his protests are in vain. Lepin in his criticism of Renan's description of Jesus' psychological condition says: "The word insanity naturally very often occurs to his mind and very often slips from his pen. The *words* madness and insanity he disclaims, but still somewhat insists upon the *fact* itself."

But when this fact has been once established, that Christ if he were not God must have been insane, it is fraught with tremendous consequences. For nothing can be more certain to an unprejudiced mind than that the Jesus of the Gospels was not insane, was in-

deed the sanest and soberest of men. We quote here merely the opinions of two of the critics, who can certainly not be suspected of being biased in favor of Jesus or the belief in his divinity. Wernle says, "Jesus is always modest, humble, sane, and sober." Harnack recognizes that Jesus "is possessed of a quiet, uniform, collected demeanor, with everything directed toward one goal. He never uses any ecstatic language and the tone of stirring prophecy is rare. Entrusted with the greatest of all missions, his eye and ear are open to every impression of the life around him, a proof of intense calm and absolute certainty." Nothing is more striking in Christ than his calmness, his serenity, his absolute mastery of himself and all the circumstances of his life.

Of course the objection could be made here that Jesus may have been insane on this one point only, namely, his deity, and that this did not affect the rest of his inner soul-life or its outward manifestation in any way. But this view, aside from its intrinsic improbability, finds no support whatever in the Gospels. We do not find that the Jesus who speaks about his deity is an altogether different man from what

he is at other times when this idea is not brought into the foreground. There is always the same prudent reserve, the same balanced temperament, the same deep calm. It is simply an impossibility to see in the Jesus of the Gospels the hallucination or soul-frenzy that the critics ascribe to him. Moreover, the whole theory of a more or less insane Jesus becomes ridiculous when we look at the results of Christ's work. His philosophy of religion has eclipsed all ancient systems and he is admittedly the greatest moral teacher of mankind. Among his disciples through all the ages are to be found many of the world's keenest, sanest, and deepest minds. Renan himself admits that the madman never succeeds. "It has not yet been given," he says, "to mental aberration to act seriously upon the progress of mankind." But Jesus Christ *did* succeed. The spirit of Jesus Christ is the genius of the civilization of the Occident. Christianity is interwoven into the very woof and fibre of our institutions and it is impossible to believe that back of our splendid civilization stands nothing better than the soul-frenzy of an insane religious enthusiast.

There is still another insurmountable objection, aside from the insanity which such claims would involve, to the view that Jesus was a mere man who labored under the delusion that he was God. No one can read the Gospels and fail to be impressed with the deep humility toward God which Jesus always manifested. He may justly be called the most humble of men. But, we ask, how is this to be reconciled with his firm conviction that he himself was God? Of course the Christian Church offers a solution of the problem with its doctrine of the Two Natures. But the critics insist on the view that Christ was a mere man, a single personality existing within the confines of a single nature. They mean to tell us that a mere man firmly believed that he was God, and at the same time felt the deepest humility towards God. Can a better example be found of a contradiction in terms? Would not that insane trait in Christ's psychological make-up that made possible his self-deifying illusion, at the same time have swept away the last vestige of creaturely humility? Surely it is the merest truism to say that a being existing in but one nature cannot fancy himself God and never-

theless feel humble as a creature before the very Being he imagines himself to be. This view of a delusionist Jesus contradicts not only history, but also sound psychology. A being who feels that he is the eternal God, and yet humbles himself before that God,—either such a being never existed or he existed in two natures, human and divine. No single nature can contain within itself such contradictions.

Indeed, this contradiction between Christ's humility and his claims to deity finds numerous parallels in the contrast that runs through the whole Gospel representation of Christ, a contrast that amounts to absurdity and impossibility on the supposition that he was a mere man.

As an acute critic of the critics says, the Jesus of the critics is at the same time humble and proud, acute-minded and weak-minded, sober and fanatical. And it is safe to say that such a man never existed, never could exist, and happily for himself and society, never will exist. A humble man is not proud, an acute-minded man never weak-minded, and a sober-minded man never fanatical. Such a psycho-

logical monstrosity is, we think, a psychological impossibility.

Of course, the critics feel that these seeming contradictions point strongly in the direction of the Church's doctrine of the two natures of Christ. But one more heroic attempt must be made to save Jesus from becoming divine. And the latest discoveries or inventions of psychology are now pointed to as more or less explaining the mystery of these supposed contradictions. First of all, the phenomena of "multiple personality" are to explain Jesus' duplex consciousness. History seems to give us cases where two radically different personalities are united in one person. We must remember, however, that no substance can be less than any or all of its component elements, that no integral unity can be split up into parts, any or all of which are to be greater than this unity itself. If we keep this in mind, it will immediately be seen that when we are pointed to the above-mentioned phenomena to explain the seeming contradictions of Christ's nature, we have before us a very good example of what is called "begging the question." Suppose that these phenomena do

offer parallels. The question still remains, How must we explain one of these personalities in Christ, that which is represented by his divine consciousness? Christ's claims to deity cannot be explained as fraud or hallucination. This, as we have seen, contradicts the Gospel picture. If it cannot be this, we are of course driven to the conclusion that we have here a real essentially divine consciousness. Now since part cannot be greater than the whole, we must conclude that the unity that unites these two personalities in Christ, his human and divine personality, cannot be less than God either. We therefore still face the same problem.

Two other phenomena are pointed to as explaining Jesus' psychological state, the subliminal self and the alternating personality. Neither of these, however, is applicable to the historical Jesus. According to the latter, Jesus would have been entirely unconscious of his divinity and the "subliminal self" theory would relegate his divinity, if not to the unconscious, then at least to the sub-conscious. Both of which views have nothing whatever to do with the historical Jesus, who is clearly



and continuously conscious of his divine nature. They cannot possibly explain Christ, because they contradict or disregard the plain facts concerning him.

In a word, then, the critics have failed to explain on their view the only Jesus known to history. We have devoted much time to the question of the explanation of the historical Jesus, because we believe that, if anything, the historical facts ought to wring from the critics the perhaps unwilling admission that Christ must have been God. We have here before us a truly remarkable fact. Here is Jesus of Nazareth, of whom the critics are certain that he was not God. And yet, on this hypothesis, namely, that he was not God, he cannot be explained. He baffles the keenest psychological and historical analysis of those who are most anxious to explain him as a mere man. We think it a fairly safe proposition, to which the critics ought to be willing to agree, that if there is but one possible explanation of any phenomenon, that must be the correct explanation. If every theory of Christ's person on the hypothesis that he was not God proves to be a flagrant contradiction of history, then

it is safe to say that this hypothesis contradicts history. And if we cannot believe that he was not God, we must believe that he was God. The critics may try to explain away many things, his sinlessness, his miracles, his resurrection. But they cannot explain away their own failure to explain him. Their own failure is the strongest proof that Christ's deity is the only key that can unlock the mysteries of Christ's personality.

In conclusion, we may also ask, How are the critics to explain the results of Christ's work, especially the truly remarkable fact that many who had known Christ in the flesh, who had seen him as a man among men, afterwards believed in his Godhead? It must not be supposed for a moment that this singular phenomenon can be explained by pointing to the fact that history gives us other instances of men being honored as gods. There are a few considerations that lift the faith of the early Christian community in the deity of Christ to an absolutely unique position, to which not even a distant parallel can be found.

First of all, we must remember the strong monotheism of the Jewish nation. The Jews

were the only nation in the world at that time who believed in one Almighty God of heaven and earth. And they had the most exalted idea of his greatness and majesty. It is comparatively easy to explain how the Romans, with their polytheism, could deify some of their emperors and give them divine honor. But this is in no way an analogy to the faith of the early Christians in the deity of their Lord. For the Jew, the mere suggestion of claiming divine honor was blasphemy. We see the high priest rending his clothes when Christ claims that he is the Son of God. Honoring a mere man as God was the very last thing a Jew would think of doing; indeed, we might almost say, a real Jew, in the full possession of his senses, could not do so. And we may add, Jesus was the very last man of whom they would think of believing such a thing. We must never forget that Christ disappointed the deepest longing of the whole Jewish nation, the longing for an earthly Messiah. Not the crown of divine honor, but the cross of shame, was what the Jew presented to Christ. And so far from seeing in him a god, they cried: "Crucify him, crucify him."

Of course, the early disciples did not take part in this crowning injustice to Jesus of Nazareth, but we know that they too had hopes of earthly glory, that they too were perplexed and filled with doubts and fears, when they saw their Master, of whom they had expected so much, nailed to the cross as a malefactor.

And yet within a short time of his death they are preaching a divine Christ. Paul, who as a Pharisee deeply hated and persecuted Jesus of Nazareth,—Paul, too, is preaching a divine Christ. And Jerusalem itself contains within its walls a congregation of Jews who bow in adoration before their new-found Lord of Glory.

Of course, attempts have been made to ascribe the whole thing to fanatical or insane enthusiasm on the part of the early Christians. But in our wonderful New Testament the first disciples of Jesus Christ have left us a memorial that is simply the embodiment of sanity and soberness. And the depth and clearness and keen logic of Paul's mind are admitted by all men. Neither secular history nor the sacred writings offer even the slightest support to the above-mentioned theories.

Here again the issue is clear. The critic will have to take the position that the strongly monotheistic Jew who believed in the one God of heaven and earth, whose high priest rent his clothes at what he considered Christ's blasphemy,—that this Jew believed that Jesus, the carpenter's son of Nazareth, a man who disappointed all the messianic hopes of his people, who was nailed to the cross as a malefactor,—that this Jew in the full possession of his senses, believed that this peasant was the Almighty God of heaven and earth, the God of his fathers, of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and that he believed this in spite of the fact that there was not the slightest evidence of the divinity of Christ, and in spite of the fact that his faith would arouse the deepest hatred and scorn of his brethren according to the flesh, and that at any moment he might have to seal his folly with his life's blood.

We, on our part, cannot lay claim to such credulity. We believe that when sane, sober-minded men believe the very last thing they would think of believing, and believe this of the very last man of whom they would think of believing it, there must be some reason

for this singular phenomenon. And we hold that the faith of the early Christians in the deity of Jesus Christ can be explained only by a still greater miracle—the mystery of mysteries,—that the man Jesus of Nazareth, the lowly, humble man of sorrows, leaning on men's bosoms and weeping at their graves, was, at the same time, the eternal God of heaven and of earth.

*Second Essay.*

By LUTHER MOORE BICKNELL.

IN broaching this question subsequently to the five questions that have already occupied our attention, it might seem that a very small field is left for our investigation. On historical and critical grounds we have been shown quite clearly that the Church has always taught the deity of Christ; that the New Testament writers, and especially the Evangelists, were so impressed with his deity that they have revealed on almost every page of their record their deep conviction of it; and finally,

that Jesus himself, walking up and down among men, taught by declaration and parable, by life and act, that he was from above, sent from God the Father, and that when he was lifted up he would draw all men unto him. All we have to do apparently is to conclude from this evidence that Jesus is divine and our end is reached.

Our field, however, though narrow, is as deep as the mind of God himself. Christ was more concerned with what men thought of him than almost anything else. He came to his disciples and he comes to each of us with the question, What think ye of Christ? Who am I? Is Christ God? and men's whole Christian experience depends upon and is governed by their conception of Jesus, whether he is divine or not. Thus our field of investigation becomes metaphysical and personal, rather than the already trodden fields of critical and historical investigation. By metaphysical we do not mean that these evidences are above human reason or beyond our consciousness, but rather that they come from the inner consciousness of men and from the mass of the world's thought as revealed in the conscious-



ness and hearts of men in all ages. It may be held that conclusions from such data necessarily cannot be accurate or final, but in the same measure that all abstract philosophical thinking is judged final by the reason prompted by faith, so the final court of appeals in our investigation must be the faith in every heart.

It is a tremendously overwhelming observation as we look over our field that faith in God and faith in Christ must stand or fall together. There is no halfway ground,—either the throne or the gibbet. The two extremes of human thinking are Theism on the one hand, with a necessary Trinity; or Atheism on the other hand, with an empty throne in heaven and the uncertainties of materialism on earth. Either we must find a supreme place for the divine Saviour or no place at all for the greatest of impostors.

From whatever viewpoint we look at the evidence for our Lord's deity we are impressed, first of all, by the supernatural element in his life. This is the element that is most difficult for the enemies of the Saviour to accept, while they can neither deny the

fact nor explain it. The supernatural is manifest in his position relatively to man and God. God made the universe with all its manifestations and developments for man. He controls it by laws of His own making. He made man superior to nature and placed him in nature to subdue and conquer it. Thus at the appearance of man a new order was inaugurated. This creature endowed with personal freedom is the starting-point of a new administration; the moral order superimposes itself upon the physical. Nature ceases in her development, she changelessly follows the cycle of her seasons and becomes the soil upon which the tree of history must grow and develop. But man is endowed with ambition and zeal for higher ideals—a more complete development—a more complete manhood. Thus we have two spiritual elements in the universe, God and man. So God has made man for a great development which man feels inherent in his inner consciousness; and God must come in touch with man to reveal his plan of development and to reveal himself to him. God only can reveal himself to man: the finite cannot comprehend the infinite save

as the infinite chooses to reveal himself. This was God's plan.

But when this plan of revelation and the plan of the development of man were interrupted by the criminal act of man which separated man from God, and would have plunged him, had he been left to himself, into inevitable ruin, the work of initiation begun by God transforms itself into a work of redemption. God no longer merely reveals himself; he works at saving; and the starting point of this great plan of redemption is the promise of victory to man over Satan on the threshold of Paradise; and the advent of Jesus Christ is the goal. He is the great Ideal Man in the mind of God, the apex of man's development, and in him was the great goal to which God was leading man in his development; a man made holy by freedom and all-powerful by free obedience. So this Jesus becomes the center of all human thinking, the unique man, and it is worthy of observation here that the eyes of all men are upon the wonderful character, personality and life of this supernatural man, who unites us as brothers with himself to God the Father. As he is

the perfect man, the ideal of man realized, so it is true that God purposes that men shall be like him, he wants the world to become like him.

So this great Ideal Man, this culmination of all man's hopes and desires, comes to man and reveals to his yearning heart something of the Infinite God himself. We said that God alone can reveal himself to man. Jesus Christ comes and satisfies man's consciousness with a conception of the depth, the breadth, and the height of God's love, his infinite mercy, his sovereign wisdom, in fact, he reveals the very God; hence, this Christ must be God.

Then another element of the supernatural is the time and manner of his appearance. There was nothing in his antecedents and surroundings to explain his appearance and radiance. There was nothing in the soil of the sordid and narrow Jewish race to produce such an embodiment of pure and universal love. There was nothing in the atmosphere of that sensual, narrow, bigoted age to beget or foster such a character of stainless and complete virtue. It is true that it was an age

of high enlightenment, the age of Augustus and Tiberius; an age when emancipated reason and philosophy were beating down the ancient pagan superstitions. But we are forced to believe that that system of truth which of all others was most repugnant to the way of thinking of men of that age, lifted up its head in it and conquered the world. Was not it reasonable that his friends and disciples should doubt him? Could he have chosen a more inauspicious time in which to reveal himself? Had his friends not been with him for years, known his brothers and sisters, walked with him as traveling companions, eaten at the same table with him, seen him suffering, hungry, weary, asking questions, weeping, groaning, dying? Can we estimate the amount of evidence required to convince those simple, narrow-minded, monotheistic Jews of his divinity,—that he was very God himself? Yet we have been clearly convinced that they did so hold him divine, and some died for that conviction. Can we reasonably assume that, “after four hundred years of waiting the germ that was committed to the soil by the prophets at last breaks forth into

life and a Being makes his appearance, who in an exceptional life attained the ideals of the prophets in a more radiant conception than they had dreamed; that he was rejected and murdered by his own people, was buried, arose as he said, and goes forth to conquer the world at the head of his army of redeemed, and is still working a greater work among a greater people"—can we dare assume, I say, that such an one is other than the Priestly King, the revealer of God, the very God himself?

Now in the second place, let us consider briefly the divine elements of his character. Horace Bushnell says that "the character of Jesus forbids classification with men." Jesus did not arrive at his excellency of character, he was born perfect in holiness. Men become pure by repentance and penance. The higher types of human purity, the excellency of a beautiful soul, has never been reached among men without repentance and self-abasement. Jesus never abased himself, never repented before his Father, never asked for pardon and mercy. He stands alone among the kneeling and penitent world and lifts a cloudless

face to heaven in the inexplicable glory of purity without penitence or remorse. Moral purity of this kind, says Godet, is not only without parallel, it is without approach. All men can do, all we can do, is to look up to that face,—strong, serene, silent,—and see in that wonderful personality something of the divine Person himself, the glory of an Eternal Spirit embodied in a person. The divinity of his character is most resplendent in his perfect holiness.

In Jesus alone man can see something of the holiness of God. In him man can see how God asserts himself in man and man can assert something of the powers of God. "In Christ, man by the voluntary annihilation of and consecration of himself became a medium so transparent that the glory of God could shine forth in him to perfection." The friends and contemporaries of Jesus testify in an overwhelming way to the fact that he was a "Lamb without spot and without blemish." Even Strauss, the greatest adversary of Christianity in our time, says of him: "Among the personages to whom humanity owes the perfection of its moral consciousness



and holiness, Jesus occupies, at any rate, the first rank. In regard to everything which concerns the love of God and of our neighbor, to purity of heart and purity of life in the inner man, nothing can be added to that moral intuition which has been bequeathed to us by the character of Jesus Christ."

The purer a man is the more easily he detects sin in his own soul,—so Christ surely by this principle would have detected the smallest sin in his life. But does such a confession at all spring from his lips? He was deeply conscious of his own perfect sinlessness, and was deeply conscious in his heart that he had not been guilty of the smallest omission in the fulfillment of his imposed task. "I have glorified thee on the earth and have finished the work thou gavest me to do," is the simple though profound confession of his soul as he poured it out before his Father. Let us close this section of our investigation with this quotation from Keim, the author of a most learned book on *The Life of Christ*. "Any one who has given himself to the contemplation of the works and acts of the Saviour, receives from it an irresistible impression that we have be-

fore us a conscience which has never felt the sting of the sense of guilt. And this is not a case of a moralist of a low and easy standard of morality. Oh no! it is he who branded with the character of sin a bare look, an idle word, and behind the veil of outward act, all impurities of the heart and motives." Paul bemoans the things he would not do, yet does. Socrates finds all the germs of all the evil inclinations in his heart. But does he, the Christ, experience anything analogous to this? He never prays for pardon for himself, either at Gethsemane or at Golgotha. He compels men to believe in his perfect holiness, he forgives men their sins, he dies for them and ascends into heaven to take his place upon the judgment throne of the All-Holy God. "Christianity, both as a creed and as a life, depends absolutely upon the personal character of Jesus Christ, who is its foundation and its Founder." This is not philosophy, this is not religion,—this is a fact.

Did space permit we might continue our study along this line in a most profitable way; considering how through his sovereign obedience he rediscovered for man the path to

God which man had lost through disobedience, his wonderful humility, his perfect manhood and love. We could see something of the influence of his character upon men who have come in touch with his wonderful life. But we will not stay further here except to remark that we can clearly see how God becomes man in the one holy, perfect Man, in order that by faith in him we all might be raised into the closest and most direct union with the Father himself. And this is compatible with our original assumption, that God wants man to reach him in his development, and that the Christ is the Way, the Truth, and the very Life, the divine Ideal Man.

Not only does the supernatural and the perfect character of Jesus afford us convincing evidence of his deity, but so also do his works. One of his divinely appointed works was the unveiling of the Father, which prepares the way for his greatest work of redemption. Undoubtedly his friends and disciples did not realize at first the divinity of their Master, but as they saw deeper into his life every day, they began to realize that he was something

more than man, that his deep conception of sin, his freedom from all effort and restraint in his goodness such as no man had shown, all bespoke his sinless purity and sovereign virtue. They realized that he was on the most intimate terms with the Father and prayed with a freedom and friendship which was utterly void of misgivings and regret. He put himself beside God in his activity,—“My Father worketh hitherto and I work.” He claimed divine origin and mission, divine knowledge and fellowship. He claimed to unveil the Father. “He that hath seen me hath seen the Father.” “I am in the Father and the Father is in me.” Such a life with such confessions from the deep conviction of his heart could do no less than establish a profound belief in his deity. And such a belief he would have guarded against had he been merely a holy man. Such was the belief,—though perhaps not fully formulated, yet lying at the heart of his followers,—that Jesus was unveiling the Father, who had been to them in their ancient and narrow theology a great Unknowable whose name they dared not utter.

Then his consummating work, his death and resurrection, clarified and confirmed their conviction, and with this confirmation the truth took definite shape and substance as an active and enduring power in human faith and worship. Said Madame de Stael: "If Christ had simply taught men to say, 'Our Father,' he would have been the greatest benefactor of the race." He did much more than that. He came to unveil the Father, declaring that "no man knoweth the Father save the Son and him to whomsoever the Son willeth to reveal him." And he has willed to reveal him by his life and death among men. The window through which men have sought a vision of God's love, his mercy and his saving power, was, and could have been, nothing else than faith in a real and complete incarnation of God in Christ. "God's love and personality were made distinct and radiant, not only by the recognition of an eternal Fatherhood in his nature, but by the light of the knowledge of his glory shining in the face of a person, and men saw in that person the fullness of the Godhead bodily." And it has been for this great faith and belief in this eternal truth that

the Church through the ages has fought to keep that window open and to maintain against "direct assault and secret dissolution the real and personal deity of Christ."

Space forbids to tell how the great doctrine of the Trinity was the outgrowth and logical development of this faith and conviction of the Church, and how this doctrine moulded and influenced the whole conception of the Christ in the history of the Church. We could profitably follow further his great work in redeeming men in all ages and how his wonderful power is still rescuing and reclaiming the wrecks of humanity upon life's sea and sending them out to do a man's work. How his glory and love are still shedding a light luminous and radiant of a new truth, a new philosophy of life, into the hearts of men and nations. How he as the center and soul of the Church has moulded the destiny of governments and subdued kingdoms that forgot his name. How the spirit of brotherhood and fraternal love is pervading the hearts of men in all climes and how his truth is reaching the darkest corners of the world and the whole earth is being filled with the knowledge and

love of God and his Son as the waters cover the sea. But let it suffice merely to say that the evidence from every phase of the investigation overwhelms our imagination and subdues our reason. We must conclude that he is the logical culmination of all philosophical and evolutionary thinking, and that his whole life and personality as associated with his great work is historically consistent and he alone satisfies the human conscience. He must be the very God of our souls.

In closing, let me suggest three convictions from the pen of Professor Godet, that have impressed me very deeply. (1) That it is impossible to detract anything from the doctrine of the essential and personal divinity of Christ, without at the same time infringing equally upon the belief in the intimacy of the relation between man and God. (2) That whatever detracts from the essential and personal divinity of Christ, detracts equally from the horror which we feel at that which separates us from God, *i. e.*, sin. (3) That whatever we detract from the essential and personal divinity of our Lord, detracts *ipso facto*



equally from the glorious reality of Christian holiness.

And now after this hasty review of the evidence, and from the faith in our hearts, we can conclude from the array of facts and from the great burden of proof this paper has merely suggested, that he is no other than the Alpha and Omega, the Beginning and the End, the very Son of God and necessarily divine.











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